

Chambre

A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z.

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De Wilde pinx^t.

Leney sculp.

MR MARTYR as AURA.

*I think this is the seventh duel I have
engaged in for her and Flora — no the eighth.*

London Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand Jan^y 21 1792.

THE
COUNTRY LASSES;

OR,
THE CUSTOM OF THE MANOR.

A
COMEDY,

BY MR. CHARLES JOHNSON.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, IN COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

As The lines distinguished by inverted commas, are omitted in this Representation.

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

M D C C X C I.



acc.

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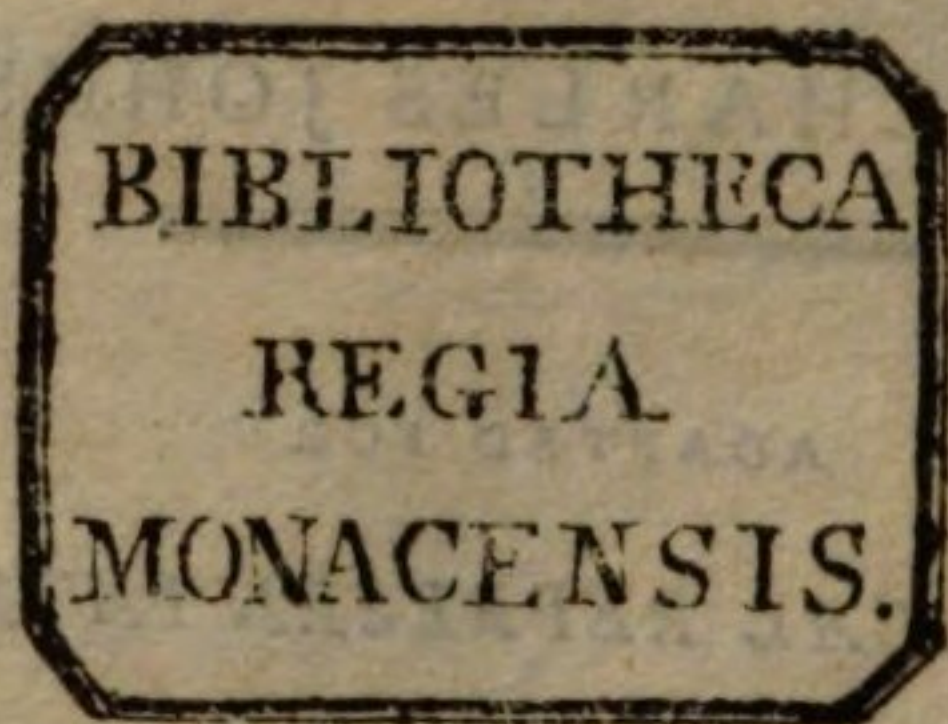
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M D C C X C I.



TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE
EARL OF CLARE.

MY LORD,

I Humbly desire your protection for the following scenes, from the rage of a despairing faction, who are now become so tender as to take offence at metaphors, and are unable to endure the touch even of a poetical figure. The epilogue, designed to send our friends in good humour from the play, disobligeed some people extremely; and they attempted to damn the comedy for an innocent allegory, as if it were presumptuous to imagine there had been a separate peace: but every honest Briton was warmed in the cause of truth, and defended it with uncommon ardour.

Your lordship has bravely entered the lists against the enemies of our constitution. You have, with the warmest heart and the most steady courage, laboured in the cause of liberty, and are at length gloriously rewarded in the happiness of your country; all that your generous spirit proposed for the most unwearied diligence, at the expence of your health and fortune.

And now, my Lord, I humbly beg leave to congratulate your Lordship upon the success of your endeavours.

A ij

Who is not filled with joy, when he sees those names again in Parliament who have constantly defended the liberties not only of Britain, but of all Europe, against the malice and ambition of some men, who prevailed upon the people to contend for slavery? But their attempts have proved ineffectual; and now, if they will not vouchsafe to be free, we thank Providence, they must serve abroad.

May your Lordship still continue to be, as you have begun, a shining ornament to your noble name and country; and may all our young nobility be animated, by your great example, with the same honest public zeal for the common good; so shall our thrice happy constitution be preserved on the present establishment to all posterity; so shall Britain recover, and for ever hold the balance of the western world; so shall it for ever be her glorious task to defend herself, and the nations around her, from tyranny and oppression.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

CHARLES JOHNSON.

CHARLES JOHNSON

WAS originally intended for the law, but that regulating the Drama was the only one he practised—He was however entered of the Middle Temple, and as the reputation of a WIT in his day was conferred by a Coffee-House, so he never by a day's absence from Button's forfeited his pretensions.

WILKS, by some means or other, he made his friend, and thus secured an easy reception to his productions—he accordingly availed himself of this advantage, and in thirty years produced nineteen Plays, Tragedies and Comedies.—Of the first I know nothing; the latter are neither at the top nor the bottom of the list—One DRAMA alone comes within the present selection, and that has long been upon the shelf.

JOHNSON was little formed to struggle with active life—he loved the tavern comforts, and accordingly became the master of one in Bow-street, which at the demise of his wife he quitted for competence and

retirement.—Poor Johnson had none of Cæsar's dangerous marks about him—he was

“Sleekheaded, fat, and slept in peace o' nights.”

POPE, as was his wont, for something or for nothing, dishonoured *himself* by abusing him—but the man was beloved by those of *better nature*, and the satire is forgotten.

COUNTRY LASSES.

THIS Comedy is busy, sprightly, and of course entertaining; its incidents however are borrowed palpably from MIDDLETON and FLETCHER.

There are two plots; one stolen from Aphra Behn, who had herself plundered "A Mad World my Masters;" the other was from "The Custom of the Country:" but it deserves infinitely more notice than the strange stuff by which Bickerstaff keeps possession of the stage; for it has character, incident, and in truth dialogue, extremely smart and whimsical.

PROLOGUE,
Spoken by a CHILD.

*MAKE me to speak a prologue! Is he wild?
A prologue? Lord! are prologues for a child?
Such heathen words! so hard to bring 'em pat in!
The drama—Athens—God knows how much Latin!
Then if I should mistake a word, you know,
There's Mr. Wilks within would snub one so—
But I must do't.*

*Plays, like ambassadors, in form are shewn,
When first they've public audience of the town;
The prologue ceremoniously harangues,
And moves your pity for the author's pangs;
Acquaints you that he stands behind the scenes,
And trembles for the fondling of his brains.
Or with—Nay, if the poet peeps, I vow
He puts me clearly out—Or with a bow,
(I mean a curtsey) [Curtseying] beg the ladies' pity;
Or else in thread-bare jests affront the city;
Or gravely tell you what you knew before,
How Ben and Shakspeare wrote in days of yore:
Then damn the critics first, that envious train,
Who, right or wrong, resolve to damn again.
Our author seeks, like bards of—of—Oh! Greece,
To make his play and prologue of a piece;*

*He leads you to the rural scenes to prove
The country bargain still is love for love.
Oh, Covent-Garden! nursery of ills!
Fam'd for consumption both of wit—and pills:
Who would not quit thy walks, and vice in fashion,
The doubts and fears of mercenary passion,
For safe complying nymphs, unknowing sinners,
A feast of unbought love in cleanly pinners!
Hold——what comes next? [Looking on a paper.] I'll
never say't, in short——
We've bigger actresses are fitter for't——
Lord, how you laugh! as 'twere some naughty joke.
Sure there's no wickedness in what I spoke.
How should I say such things, who never knew
What kissing meant, before I play'd Miss Prue?*

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

HEARTWELL, <i>in love with</i> Flora,	-	Mr. Hull.
MODELY,	- - - - -	Mr. Dyer.
FREEHOLD,	- - - - -	Mr. Gibson.
SIR JOHN ENGLISH,	- - - - -	Mr. Shuter.
LURCHER, <i>nephew to</i> Sir John,	-	Mr. Davis.
SNEAK, <i>a taylor,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. Holtom.
Longbottom,	- - - - -	Mr. Perry.
CARBUNCLE, <i>a vintner,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. Morris.
TIM. SHACKLEFIGURE,	- - - - -	Mr. Hamilton.
DOUBLEJUGG,	- - - - -	Mr. Dunstall.
VULTUR,	- - - - -	Mr. Cushing.

Women.

FLORA,	- - - - -	Mrs. Lessingham.
AURA,	- - - - -	Miss Macklin.

Countrymen, Maids, &c.

SCENE, A Country Village, about forty Miles from London.



THE
COUNTRY LASSES;
OR,
THE CUSTOM OF THE MANOR.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An open country in perspective, with a gentleman's seat on a hill, at the foot of which is seen a farm-house. Enter MODELY and HEARTWELL, in riding habits, a Footman appearing, &c.

Heartwell.

LEAD our horses round to the farm-house which stands yonder at the foot of the hill.

Mode. We'll walk cross the fields, and meet you there.

Heart. You heard the country fellows say we were seven miles from any town; you know our horses are so lame, it will be impossible to travel on; you see the sun is sinking from the top of yonder hill. Be content, George; to-night thou shalt have thy be-

loved mistress, Variety, and lie in a barn, in a warm barn, upon a truss of clean straw—

Mode. With a wholesome country girl, whose breath is sweeter than the bloom of violets, in a straw hat, a kersey gown, and a white dimity waistcoat; with natural red and white that innocently flushes over her face, and shews every emotion of her heart.

Heart. Thus thy imaginations always cheat thee of thy joys. No, no: if we get credit for a barn, 'tis all I expect. This is a change of life, however.

Mode. True; we tread no more the same insipid circle; our pains quicken our pleasures, and disappointments give spirit to our joys.

Heart. Ha! then a man should be sick to relish health.

“ *Mode.* Therefore I hate London, where their
“ pleasures, like their Hyde-Park circle, move al-
“ ways in one round; where yesterday, to-day, and
“ to-morrow, are eternally the same; to the choco-
“ late-house, to dinner, the coffee-house, the play-
“ house, a bottle, or a wench; 'tis the journey of a
“ dog in a wheel, the music of a country fiddle, eter-
“ nally vexing the strings to thrum the same weary
“ notes.

“ *Heart.* Pr'ythee, no more; thy raillery, too, is
“ the same dull dish served over and over. Thou
“ hast no appetite, and railest at a feast.”

Mode. Wherefore has nature opened this wild irregular scene of various pleasures! why given us appetites, passions, limbs, but to possess, desire, enjoy

her beautiful creation? I'll travel over, and taste every blessing; nor wait till the tired sense palls with possession, but fly from joy to joy, unsated, fresh for new delights.

Heart. Do so, make yourself as good an entertainment as you can possibly form in imagination; while I walk forward, and endeavour to get a real supper and a bed. [Going.

Mode. Nay, I'll go with you. You know I am no Platonic; in love or mutton, I always fall to without ceremony. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

FLORA, AURA, and some country Maids and Men dancing, with a fiddle before them, singing, the burden of the ballad: The lads and the lasses a sheep-sheering go.

Aura. In short, my feet are out o' measure; I am tired with the mirth of the day, "and my weary
"limbs hobble after the crowd, like a tired pack-
"horse to the lamentable music of his own heavy
"bells."

Flora. You have won the garland of the green; the sheep-sheerers have given you the honours of their feast; you must pay the fees, and dance out of their debt.

"*Aura.* Strike up then, thou torturer of cat-guts,

“ clap thy ear and thy hands to the fiddle, and awake
 “ the drowsy strings.”

Flora. First we'll have the sheep-sheering song.

THE SHEEP-SHEERING,

A BALLAD.

*When the rose is in bud, and blue violets blow,
 When the birds sing us love-songs on every bough,
 When cowslips, and daisies, and daffodils spread,
 And adorn and perfume the green flowery mead ;*

When without the plough

Fat oxen low,

The lads and the lasses a sheep-sheering go.

The cleanly milk-pail

Is fill'd with brown ale ;

Our table's the grass ;

Where we kiss and we sing,

And we dance in a ring,

And every lad has his lass.

The shepherd sheers his jolly fleece,

How much richer than that which they say was in Greece !

'Tis our cloth and our food,

And our politic blood ;

'Tis the seat which our nobles all sit on :

'Tis a mine above ground,

Where our treasure is found ;

'Tis the gold and the silver of Britain.

Aura. Now, Clodden, once more thy hand, if thou durst venture t'other trip.

“ *Clod.* Ay, with all my heart, fair maiden; I'll
“ stand by you, to be sure, as long as 'tone foot will
“ stand by t'other.

“ *Aura.* Away, then. [A dance.

“ 1 *Count.* Odsnigs, she dances featly! Ha, Mall,
“ didst thou ever see the peer o'en?

“ 2 *Count.* Pray ye, now, who be thick maidens,
“ who have been so merry at our feast to-day?

“ 1 *Count.* Nay, nay, I know 'em not. Neighbour
“ Clodden brought 'em; they been his guests, to be
“ sure.

“ *Clod.* Now, look ye, d'ye see, to be sure we will
“ have the Sheep-sheering once again, and then it
“ will be time to go home. The sun is going to bed
“ already. Come, neighbour, dust it away.”

[Dance, and exeunt omnes, except *Aura* and *Flora*.

Aura. Cousin, I'll go to London.

Flora. What new lure has Satan employed to tempt you thither?

Aura. Only to see some of my own species, a few men and women; for I cannot look on the things we talk'd to just now, but as beings between men and beasts, and of an inferior nature to the people who grow in cities. If I stay longer among these savages, I shall not have vanity enough to keep myself clean. I must go to London to recover my pride; 'tis starving here.

Flora. And yet, how often have I heard thee rail at

London, and call it an infectious congregation of vapours, an assemblage of falsehood and hypocrisy?

Aura. 'Tis true; but my affections have taken another turn. The heart of a woman, girl, like a bowl down a hill, continually changes as it rolls; "'tis a glass
" that receives every image, but retains none; the
" next new idea wholly effaces the former." I declare seriously, I never knew my own mind two hours together in my life.

" *Flora.* 'Tis a blank sheet, and yet will receive no
" impression. How often have I endeavoured to en-
" grave there an aversion to that abominable town,
" where credit is the pawn of knaves, and fattens
" upon the avarice of fools. Religion has been made
" the politician's bubble, and honour's public mer-
" chandise; and what ought to be the distinction of
" virtue, has been there made the price of sin. The
" tyrant, money, governs all: there every thing is
" venal; faith, fame, friendship, reason, and reli-
" gion; nay, love, my dear, love, is bought and
" sold there too.

" *Aura.* O' my word, you declaim, child, like a
" country schoolmaster. Yet, after all, people bred
" in society, who can talk, and look, and lie, and
" bow a little, are as much superior to these clowns,
" as angels are to them.

" *Flora.* Have you courage enough to go barefaced
" into a crowd, where every body wears a mask?

" *Aura.* No, I'll be in the mode, and wear one
" too.

“ *Flora*. What, at the price of truth? With us
“ now every thing is unadorn’d by art, and looks so
“ beautiful in the dress of nature, so innocent, sim-
“ ple, and undisguised—

“ *Aura*. Ay; but there is a sort of wearisome dul-
“ ness that waits upon our simplicity. Now here we
“ must travel seven miles, seven long miles at least,
“ to a beggarly country village, which you pom-
“ pously stile our market town, where we may by
“ chance see two things like intelligent beings, the
“ parson and the attorney, or it may be some younger
“ brother of some neighbouring lord of the manor,
“ whose face carries the colour of the October, and
“ his shape of the hogshead he feeds on, who drinks
“ so constantly and so much, as if all the religion he
“ had ever been taught was, that man was created to
“ swallow a prodigious quantity of stale beer.”

Flora. Cousin, thou art a very wild fop.

Aura. We are all so in our hearts. What girl,
whose whole composition is not dough and phlegm,
would quit the management of her fan for a shep-
herdess’s crook, or gather daisies in the meads, and
make garlands for lambs, when she may pick up
hearts in the ring, and make conquests of men, or be
content to behold the muddy reflection of her own
face in a pond, when she may glide through a crowd
of living mirrors in the drawing-room, and be flat-
tered by the whole *beau monde*—But, o’ my conscience,
here they are!

Flora. What?

Aura. Men, my dear, men—human creatures; look yonder, they move towards us; my heart beats quick at the uncommon sight; does not thine too? Be honest, and tell truth.

Flora. Remember your character, compose yourself, put your manners in your pocket, and be a clown for a moment.

“*Aura.* My hands are set, my eyes are fix’d, I
“ have a blush at command, I’ll bite the fingers of
“ my cotton gloves, and be as very a She-Cudden as
“ ever hopped round a may-pole.

*Enter MODELY and HEARTWELL as FLORA and
AURA are going off.*

Mode. Pretty maidens, stay one moment; turn again and give your assistance to two honest fellows in distress—our horses are lame, ’tis late, we have lost our way—

Heart. And we wou’d know where—(She is intolerably handsome!) [*Aside of Flora.*

Mode. We shall lie to-night?—(She is a sweet girl.) [*Aside of Aura.*

Flora. Sir, we buy, we don’t sell fortune; two gypsies just now offered us a penny-worth, they passed by those elms, I believe you may o’ertake ’em.

Aura. Yes, Sir, they will tell you what will happen to you exactly—good evening. [*Going.*

Mode. Nay, if I part with you thus.

“*Heart.* I am surpris’d—such dialect. So much

“ beauty here, too, in a wild country hamlet—’tis
“ wonderful.

“ *Mode.* They have the perfect mien of fine ladies
“ at St. James’s in their air.

“ *Heart.* Ay, and their habits are genteel tho’ ru-
“ ral. Don’t let ’em go yet, Modely.

Mode. “ No, no—you must not stir.”

[*Holding her.*

Aura. Pray, Sir, as you are a gentleman—

Mode. Why, you wou’d not leave us in a strange
place, child?

Aura. We have no title at all to you ; if you are a
couple of stray cattle, all we can do is, to bring you to
the constable.

Mode. And what then?

Aura. Why then he must cry you three market-
days, and if no body owns you, you fall to the lord
o’ the manor.

Heart. [*To Flora, to whom he has been talking.*] Stay
one moment, dear creature, vanish not immediately,
if you wou’d not have me believe myself in a vision,
and go raving up and down, talking of angels in
country habits.

Flora. You have been talking all this while out o’
my compass : pray, Sir, come down to my under-
standing ; mine, you see, is as plain as my dress—
“ ’Tis downright popery, to say your prayers in an
“ unknown tongue.

“ *Heart.* I’ll turn catholic, any thing, say you’ll be
“ my saint.

“ *Flora.* But can I grant your prayer, if I don’t
“ understand your petition ?

“ *Heart.* Your understanding is equal to your
“ form, for to say which excels is impossible, where
“ both are perfect.

“ *Flora.* If I have any understanding, don’t batter
“ it with hard words. I know no woman who is
“ proof against flattery ; that Will-with-a-whisp
“ leads us all astray ; but I’ll shut my ears and take
“ myself away from it instantly.

“ *Heart.* ’Tis impossible to see thee and not talk in
“ rapture.—Thou beautiful robber, won’t you gag
“ me, too ?

“ *Flora.* It grows late : pray give me my hand : let
“ me go.”

Heart. In one word then ; who is the inhabitant of
that farm-house in the bottom ?

Aura. A sour old man, Sir, who, when he is in a
very good humour, vouchsafes to call me daughter.

Flora. And me cousin : there we live, gentlemen,
and are like to live, fretting one another like silk and
worsted wove together, ’till we quite wear out.

Heart. You have none of the rust of the country
upon you—’tis wonderful ; you live polish’d among
savages. Neither your words, your mien, your man-
ners, nor any thing but your habits, speak you what
you wou’d appear.

Aura. My father and the vicar of our parish taught
us both to read and write ; but indeed, Sir, my father
was born a gentleman, and is by accident only a clown,

for having in his youth profusely squander'd a great estate in London among common friends and mistresses, he took an aversion to the town, and turn'd his sword into a ploughshare.

“ *Flora.* 'Tis so, gentlemen: in him you may see
“ a thoughtless rake, degenerated into a plodding farmer—only a few books scatter'd carelessly about,
“ keep alive the memory of the gentleman; and when
“ a recess from his daily labour gives him leave, he
“ will read a page or two in a Latin satirist, and as
“ he smokes his pipe in our broad chimney-corner,
“ explains to us all the ill-natur'd things they say of
“ cities, courts, and polite pleasures, as we call 'em;
“ he declares he chose this solitude to soften himself,
“ and file off that barbarity he had contracted by conversing with mankind.”

Heart. Is it impossible to see this sour Cynic?—I persuade myself we might revive those seeds of humanity that once liv'd within him, and get entertainment in his farm for one night only: especially if you wou'd be so good to use your power too, and venture to intercede for a stranger.

Flora. Sir, 'tis impossible! if you wore any form but what you do.

Heart. Ask him only; try a little; use the influence of your eyes—Ask him with a look of pity, and 'tis impossible he should deny you.

“ *Flora.* Ay; but I myself am not rightly satisfied;
“ I fear——

“ *Heart.* Away with fear, 'tis an enemy to all that

“ is brave or generous. Can we offend against all
“ the laws of humanity, honour, hospitality? I swear
“ there’s an awful charm in your eyes, wou’d stop
“ the burning rage of a drunken libertine.

“ *Flora.* Ah! no more o’ that, I beg you. Shall
we ask?” [To *Aura*.

Aura. Will you venture?

Flora. I am half afraid! if you wou’d second me.

Aura. Never fear, my girl: I’ll stand bravely by
thee—Gentlemen, we’ll endeavour to prevail, and you
shall have an answer in the turn of a second.

[*Exeunt Flora and Aura.*

Heart. What a couple of jewels are here in rustic
work!

Mode. I never beheld any thing so charming!

Heart. What a shape, a neck, a chest!

Mode. An air, a mien, an instep, a foot!

Heart. Why, you don’t mean my girl?

Mode. Nor you mine, I hope?

Heart. Mine is the most beautiful piece of flesh and
blood——

Mode. Mine the sweetest, most angelical little
rogue——

Heart. Her hair is dark brown, her eyes are two
black globes of living light——Diamonds of the first
water——

Mode. Her breath is sweeter than the new-made
haycock. I had rather look upon her than enjoy a
toast——

Heart. I never saw any thing in a brocade so genteel.

Mode. I am stark mad for a dimity petticoat.

“ *Heart.* Ten thousand—

“ *Mode.* Pray give me leave, Sir; her—

“ *Heart.* I tell you, Sir; ten thousand thousand
 “ Cupids play in every ringlet of her hair, millions
 “ of little loves wanton in her eyes, myriads of graces
 “ sip nectar from her lips; infinite, nameless, be-
 “ witching beauties revel in every feature of her trans-
 “ porting face; 'tis extreme pleasure to see her, 'tis
 “ rapture to hear; when she smiles I am in ecstasy,
 “ and all beyond, George, all beyond are unutterable
 “ joys.

“ *Mode.* Unspeakable pleasures.”

Heart. Ah, rogue, rogue! what a lucky night is this!

Mode. If we get in. [Embracing one another.

Heart. If we have entrance—Hold, here they come, and old Crabtree with 'em.

Enter FREEHOLD, FLORA, and AURA.

Free. Oh, hoh—perhaps these are some of my Covent-Garden acquaintance.

Flora. I can't tell; but they have waited a great while for an answer.

Free. Let 'em wait, with a murrain.

Aura. Please, Sir, to say aye or no.

Free. No, then, no—Burn my house and barns, send the murrain among my cattle, the mildew in my corn, and the blight in my fruit—but let no London

plagues come within my doors—What has bewitch'd you to ask such a question?

Flora. They desire in common humanity, as they are gentlemen——

Free. Gentlemen—Hah! why they are the bane of your sex. The devil did less mischief in the form of the serpent to Eve, than in that to her daughters—— A woman's reputation is always lost when 'tis ventur'd——but these are profess'd sharpers, who never play upon the square for beauty, and are worse enemies to it than old age or the small-pox.

Aura. We are guarded, Sir, by you—by your instructions.

Free. Hah! true daughter of the first woman. Well! I'll talk with 'em, to oblige you. Where are they?

Flora. There they are, Sir: they look like sober, civil, honest gentlemen, and not as if they came from London.

Free. Now I think they look like a deputation from the cuckold-makers of the corporation.

Mode. Sir, the unexpected occasion of this trouble—— [To Freehold.

Free. Oons, Sir, speak truth; I know what you are pumping for, a pretty excuse for an unseasonable visit; I have not told one lie in compliment these thirty years.

Heart. Nor heard one neither?

Free. No, Sir, nor heard one; here we only make up a few necessary lies for a market-day, or so.

Mode. But we wou'd only say in plain words——

Free. I'll tell you what honourable design you two have clubb'd for in plain words; your horses were to fall lame, you were to be benighted, and making use of my humanity for entrance into my house, you very honestly hope for an opportunity to ruin my family. Ask your conscience, is it not so? hah!

Heart. We confess the charge is too generally true; but we beg leave to be excepted, and declare such practices, whatever habits men wear, call 'em villains—However, if 'tis impossible to gain credit with you——

Free. Whence came you?

Heart. From London.

Free. From London? so I thought again; the mart of iniquity, Satan's chief residence; he picks up a vagabond soul or two now and then with us, but he monopolizes there.

“ *Heart.* What drove you first from London?

“ *Free.* Millions of impertinents. I could not bear
 “ to dance attendance in the antichambers, and catch
 “ cold on the stair-cases of false tricking courtiers;
 “ nor endure to be bespattered by the chariot of an
 “ upstart, a mushroom, who finds himself, he does
 “ not know how, by a figure in a lottery, a turn of a
 “ die, or the folly of a woman, metamorphosed into
 “ a gentleman, and lolling in the chariot that his fa-
 “ ther drove. I could not pay my court to a quality
 “ idiot of the last edition, I had not patience to attend
 “ the burlesque rhodomontades of a liar in red, nor
 “ the nauseous flattery of an atheist in black.

“ *Heart.* Ah, Sir, London is changed since your
“ pious days ; then indeed, there was too great an
“ indulgence given to libertines.

“ *Free.* Ay, 'tis changed, truly ; I hear what your
“ modern London is ; we were lewd, indeed, in our
“ days, but then, even lewdness had propriety ; but
“ of late they say your fools set up for rakes, and
“ rakes for politicians ; nay, even now you may see
“ there sharpers in brushed beavers and bobs, and
“ cullies in long wigs and swords ; and instead of
“ changing honest staple for gold and silver, you deal
“ in bears and bulls only ; you have women who are
“ chaste, and would yet appear lewd ; and you have
“ saints that are sinners ; in short, 'tis a very wicked
“ town, your parsons stock-job, and your wenches
“ pray.

“ *Mode.* But what is all this to the world of love, and
“ wit, and gallantry, old Diogenes ?

“ *Free.* Your very beaus, they say, now give way
“ to your witlings ; and you may hear your fops in un-
“ derstanding rail at those in dress. Who can with
“ patience bear a coxcomb that supports the credit of
“ his parts by retailing of wit, who makes a feast in
“ the city, with the good things, as he calls 'em, the
“ scraps that he steals from court, and insults his in-
“ timates with a stolen understanding, who really be-
“ lieves himself a useful creature for keeping up the
“ circulation of wit.

“ *Heart.* Those gentlemen have breviates for wits ;
“ and while they attend a vacancy serve as cadets.”

Mode. But, Sir, to our purpose ; is there no security to be taken for one night only ?

Free. There is ; but 'tis in my own hands, if you'll accept the terms ; look ye, gentlemen, I have one faithful friend in the world, 'tis honest Towser, a true-bred mastiff, one who never scrapes nor kisses my hand, but in honest truth ; who will stand by me with his best blood. Now he does me the favour to lie every night at my bed's foot ; I am likewise master of a brace of large-boned threshers ; and these three have been the guardians of my farm these ten years ; they have no more respect than I for a laced coat : you know the rest ; if I hear the conies squeak, I'll send the hunt abroad ; I'll ha' no poaching, no tunneling, no driving in the dark.

Heart. Sir, we accept your terms ; he that intends no wrong, fears none.

Free. There then, enter. There lies your way.

[*Exeunt Freehold, Modely and Heartwell, into the Farm.*]

Flora. Laud, cousin, he has taken 'em both in.

Aura. I tremble so, I don't know what to do.

Flora. It was your fault.

Aura. You were bewitched to ask him.

Flora. Why did not you advise me to the contrary ?

Aura. O dear, my heart beats.

Flora. Ay, it beats to arms, child, the garrison is besieged.

Aura. Come, let's in ; courage.

Flora. These are your doings, you wild little colt.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Inside of a Farm. Enter FREEHOLD, MODELY, and HEARTWELL.

Free. Forget you have been within the walls of a city, and we shall agree well enough.

Heart. But, Sir, do you never, never intend to see London again ?

Free. Never, never, I tell you.

Heart. Why so, Sir ?

Free. “ I gave you my reasons : but I’ll repeat ’em to
“ please you, I am unqualified for conversation there.
“ I have not slavish complaisance enough to work up
“ every muscle to a forced smile, and court the no-
“ jests of a wealthy fool, in hopes to see my name in
“ the codicil of his will. I cannot be ravished with
“ the young graces of a superannuated beauty, who
“ forgets she has not one tooth in her head, for which
“ she is not in debt ; in short,” there is not a creature
among you wears his natural shape ; your cullies would
be thought sharpers, and your sharpers cullies ; your
noisy roaring boys are cowards, and your brave men
silent ; ugliness is exactly dressed, and beauty in dis-
habille. The few virtues you have, you hide, and af-
fect crimes to be agreeable. In a word, you are all
false, double-fac’d, execrable hypocrites. Come, will
you drink a cup of brown ale before you eat ?

Heart. I thank you, Sir, but I am not thirsty now.

Free. Oons, do you never drink but when you are

dry? We have none o' your lemonade or sherbet here, man; no, nor your t'other washy thin potation, called French wine, that brewer of false love and politics: we live upon English beef and beer, the staple of our own country.

Heart. And every honest Briton ought to encourage it.

Free. Right, boy: come, will you smoke a pipe before supper: a pipe is the best whet in the world.

Mode. No, by no means.

Free. Oh, hoh, it will spoil your kissing.

Mode. Pray, Sir, who is the lord of your manor here?

Free. We have no lord, Sir, we have a lady.

Mode. A lady?

Free. Ay, Sir, she lives at the great house on the hill, above, with an old knight her kinsman, whose estate joins to hers; one Sir John English, a gentleman of right old-fashioned hospitality: he has only one fault, he is a little too fond of your quality: he was at court in his youth, where he had a superficial view of the glare and gaiety of the place; and now he doats upon every thing that comes from thence; he is particularly civil to a page; he has a wonderful veneration for a squire o' the body; a knight gives him great joy; and he is ravished with a lord.

Mode. A very odd humour: but as to the lady of your manor?

Free. Ay, there's a lady, a miracle! she has youth and beauty, and two thousand pounds a year, and yet

has the use of all her limbs; she will walk you four miles before the sun is up, and come home with natural colours on her face, got by wholesome exercise. She uses no face physic; she is none o' your town daubers, that are in danger of losing their complexions for a kiss! no, she looks like the blooming rose, and is as sweet as the breath of the morning.

Mode. Was she never married, Sir?

Free. No, the old colonel, her father, Sir Frederick Beauville (a worthy man he was) left her and her estate free; and she says she will keep 'em both so: she hates London, your men and your manners.

Mode. And so she is settled, as the timber upon her estate, for life, with her old kinsman!

Free. Yes, there they live together; and let me tell you, the old hospitable genius of England seems revived in them; they are of almost as much benefit to their neighbours as the sun and rain, a general good. Well! but come into this room and drink a cup of ale; nay, I will have it so.

Mode. We'll follow you.

Free. What, you see the wenches coming; remember our articles, or Towser's the word. [*Exit.*

Enter FLORA and AURA.

Mode. Hah, my Mademoiselle once again! I'll kill thee, my dear little thief, with kisses.

Aura. Then I shall be the first maid that ever died that death, and deserve to be buried with my face downwards; though I have known many a big fellow

brag of his victories, who durst never draw his sword.

Mode. But I have fought many a duel.

Aura. And did you always conquer?

Mode. No, sometimes it has been a drawn battle: but now I'll be victorious or die. [*Kisses and hugs her.*]

Aura. Laud, lud, you do so touzle and rumple one's clothes: you men are the strangest creatures.

Mode. You women have the most whimsical fancies! Whither do you run? What, must I follow you?

Aura. If you have courage, the old dragon is in the next room.

Mode. Pox o' the dragon; I am a knight-errant, and 'tis my business to conquer dragons.

Aura. Come on, then, Hercules the second.

[*Exeunt Mode and Aura.*]

Heart. Hear me! let me swear to you, fair maid.

Flora. What is it you would swear; that you love me?

Heart. More than life, joy, health, or liberty;
 " my whole soul darts through my eyes in transport
 " to behold you, every atom is in arms, my blood
 " gallops through my veins;" I am all air while I
 talk to you.

" *Flora.* I am afraid your zeal is not of the right
 " sort, but like the agitation of those false prophets,
 " who fancy themselves inspired from above, when
 " they are only actuated below; this is not warmth,
 " but wind; all bubble, vapour.

“ *Heart.* You should forgive a small delirium to a
“ wretch in a fever.

“ *Flora.* I can forgive a madman, but I won’t re-
“ gard him.

“ *Heart.* Would you not pity, and cure him if you
“ could?

“ *Flora.* Then you would be cured of love.

“ *Heart.* By possession of what I die for.

“ *Flora.* True, possession cures love, as death
“ does diseases.

“ *Heart.* By those immortal eyes, ’twill make mine
“ live for ever.

“ *Flora.* No, no, ’twill die suddenly. Love’s an
“ ague, and the cold fit certainly succeeds the hot.

“ *Heart.* Do you believe no man is constant?

“ *Flora.* I dont know, if one were to mould you;
“ make you as one does one’s clothes, or so.

“ *Heart.* Make me, mould me as you please; fancy
“ the man you would have in idea.

“ *Flora.* I believe indeed I shall never have a man
“ any otherwise than in idea—But no more flourish-
“ es, I pray you, Sir; we have conversed in figure
“ ever since we saw one another: and you know,
“ though one might like to smell to a rose nosegay
“ now and then——

“ *Heart.* One does not care to feed upon a rose.”

Flora. Come, then, let us clear up at once, and
talk common sense to one another.

Heart. Agreed!

Flora. So be it!

Heart. Why then really I never liked a woman better in my life.

Flora. I think you are something more than tolerable; I was going to say an agreeable fellow.

Heart. Do you like me?

Flora. As I might a picture.

Heart. Do you take me only for the shadow of a man?

Flora. To me no more, for I look on this accident only as the idle delusion of a morning's dream.

Heart. Then let me wake thee into real happiness; the little god of love shall wanton in thy heart, as he now plays and revels in thy eyes.

Flora. Hold! hold! you are running back into metaphor; why this is downright poetry. Pray come to common sense again.

Heart. That is very true; to be short, then, whereabouts is your bed-chamber?

Flora. Pho, now you talk idly.

Heart. Do you lie alone, child? [Kissing her.

Flora. Why are you so impertinent?

Heart. Why are you so coy?

Flora. What, then, it seems, you do certainly assure yourself, that, having kissed me, squeezed my hand, and sighed out a few unnecessary fine things, I shall fall plum into your arms, as cats get birds by gazing at 'em?

Heart. Come, my love, this dialect is as affected as t'other; take this jewel, accept it, wear it as a token of the most pure affection; you shall live with me,

command me and my fortune. I'll take you from this cottage, and this odd old man, and you shall live as your beauty and your wit demand you should, in all the various pleasures this gay world can give you. [*Embracing her.*]

Flora. Here, Sir, take your toy again; I thank you humbly for the mighty favour; I sell no beauty. What, would you barter with me for myself? Bribe me out of my person? 'Tis poorly done; but know, Sir, I have a heart within, that proudly tells me no price shall ever buy it: but is it honest in you to tempt that innocence you should protect? Reason distinguishes men from beasts, and virtue, men from men: now, as you boast of birth and virtuous ancestors, and would wear those honours as your lawful merit; think, reflect; are your intentions agreeable to justice, honour, gratitude? You wrong yourself as well as me; farewell. [*Exit.*]

Heart. She has stung me to the soul with her too just reproaches; I am conscious and ashamed of my crime: "her virtues, like her beauties, stood at first
" so silently within her, so unstirred by the least air
" of vanity, she looked as if she knew 'em not; and
" yet, when the last injury provoked 'em, they
" flushed and swelled her heightened features with
" such pointed indignation—It is not to be borne—
" My heart burns within me—She sinks into my
" mind." I must have her, though at the price of liberty. I'll marry her; but what will the world say—I'll renounce it; I'll abjure it:

*I'll give her all my future life, and prove,
Like Antony, the world well lost for love.* [Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

*Enter LURCHER, VULTUR, CARBUNCLE a Vint-
ner, LONGBOTTOM a Peruke-maker, and SNEAK a
Taylor.*

Lurcher.

Ah, Vultur! love and the dice have undone me. I have pursu'd Angelica, and my bad fortune, to the last farthing. What must I do? dishonour waits upon necessity; and he that keeps his virtue when he is poor, is a hero indeed.—Yet I'll endeavour, struggle hard, and not part with the gentleman while 'tis possible to preserve him.

Vult. What do you mean to do with these hungry rascals, who follow you thus for their debts?

Lurch. To pay 'em.

Vult. When?

Lurch. To-morrow.

Vult. Which way?

Lurch. My uncle shall lend me the money.

Vult. Good!

Lurch. Ay, my uncle, Sir John English, who inhabits the great house with the turret o' top there. He shall lend me the money, then will I discharge

D ij

these clamorous thieves, and be saucy to them in my turn.]

Vult. You rave; why your uncle has not seen you these ten years, nor can be prevailed upon to trust you even with subsistence. What do you mean?

Lurch. Why, he shall lend me the money, and not know he lends it me: I'll extort it from him by the violence of stratagem; I'll stare him full in the face, and make him believe I oblige him when I receive the money.—

Vult. Riddles! riddles!

Sneak. I pray you, Master Lurcher, indeed now, you know I have waited a long time, a most scandalous long time, for my money, and your bill lengthens and lengthens every day; upon my word, I shall not be able to hold out.---Besides, here you have draggled me a long way, and told me I should be paid by your uncle; and alas-a-day, 'tis an idle tale, a flim-flam, for you dare not so much as look towards the gates of his house—No, he won't see you, it seems; I wish I were at home again.—Here have you brought us into a cursed country, where we can neither get victuals, nor sleep.

Carb. Pho, pox, this is very silly; is this your land of Canaan that you talk'd of, that flowed with strong beer and chines of beef?

Lurch. Have patience, old fiery face, thy nose shall have comfort presently.—

Carb. Patience! demme, Dick, which way now shall I come by my money?—You know I love you,

you roaring young dog, you know I do ;—but here, now, here's a hundred pounds due for clean claret, besides money lent, hard neat money——Reckonings paid, coach hire, suppers at your lodging, and ladies fees.—How the devil do you imagine, now, Dick Lurcher, that I shall pay the merchant—Why, you will force me to break and turn gentleman—It will never do.

Long. Sir, I would in the most submissive manner imaginable——

Lurch. So, so, what! all upon the hunt at once—One word, gentlemen.

Long. You know very well the last tye-up I sold you was as light and bright as silver, and as strong as wire, with a fine flowing, large open curl ; I reckon you but twelve pieces for it ; and upon my soul, my lord Lanthorn Joul would have paid me as much for it in ready gold.

Lurch. And why wou'd you not take his money ?

Long. Because it did not suit his complexion.

Lurch. Why what was that to thee, puppy ?

Long. Ah, Sir, his dark olive face would have thrown a shade upon the brightness of the hair ; I should have lost all my credit. Now, Sir, if a gentleman does but wear one's work well, and become it—I must needs say that for your worship.

Lurch. Well, gentlemen, here you are, and I thank you for your attendance to my uncle's. I wish I had interest enough in my own person to desire you to walk in and refresh : but that is impossible.

Carb. Why, what do you think I'll lie in the fields, Dick? No, no, I'll have a dram, and a jug of his stingo too: what, I'll try the interest of my own face rather than fail.

Lurch. Thy face! nay, 'tis time indeed: the lights in thy face, Carbuncle, begin to burn blue; and if thou dost not get some fuel for them, they will go out in utter darkness—look ye, gentlemen, my fellow travellers and friends,” if you will agree to a project I have, and be content to act your parts in it, I will engage you all a lodging, and the best entertainment in the house: nay, perhaps your money too.

Sneak. I pray you, what is your project, Mr. Lurcher? tho' I own I have no great opinion of projects, or projectors.

Carb. Demme, Dick, what is it? I love projects and whims wonderfully.

Long. I always said, upon my soul I did always affirm, that he was a very fine gentleman; tho' really I hope this project will produce a bed and a supper, “for I am somewhat hungry.”

Lurch. Doubt it not, gentlemen: you and all the world know the character of Sir John English: he is excessively fond of quality, and piques himself upon being the most hospitable man in the county.

Carb. And what then?

Lurch. Why then I have a mind to put the change upon him.

Carb. Change upon him! how?

Lurch. Why, I will be a man of quality ; I'll clap a blue ribbon across my shoulders, " and a patch upon " my face ;" and if you will assist me so far, if you will condescend so low as to be thought part of my equipage, why we will come rattling to his gates, and be received with as much joy and ceremony as if we were really what we appeared.

Carb. Egad, I approve it wonderfully—We'll revel in October and roast beef.

Long. Upon my soul, a very elegant design—You'll wear your best bag?

Sneak. But how will this help us to our money, Mr. Lurcher?

Carb. Why, his lordship will take the knight to picquet after supper, and bite him.

Lurch. No, no, Sir John never plays ; I have a more honourable design than that, I assure you.

Carb. What is it? Out with it, my little bully boy.

Lurch. Why, when all the family are fast asleep, we will clap on our masking suits and vizors——

Carb. And rob the house ; very good.

Sneak. Oh, laud ! rob the house ; why, what do you think I'd be hang'd for your projects?

Lurch. No, my hogshead of iniquity, no : we will bind them in their beds, and one another afterwards, and yet not rob the house of a shilling.

Carb. To what purpose should you bind them, then?

Lurch. Don't enquire further beforehand—I beg you only to trust me with the conduct of this affair—

I'll venture my life I shall bring you all off safe: I have in our coach, which stands by the road-side, every thing that can be necessary for the execution of our design—Nay, nay,—don't let your courage sink, now we are upon action, lads——

Sneak. I desire to be excus'd; I will not engage in it.

Carb. I'll slice you if you mutter, I'll demolish—What! do you mutiny? Go on, Dick, we'll follow you to the end of the world.

Lurch. Along, then, my lads of mettle; be firm and united, and I will be answerable for the success.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Court-yard to Sir JOHN ENGLISH's House; Sir JOHN, unbutton'd, without his Hat, and TIMOTHY SHACKLEFIGURE, his Steward.

Sir John. Good now! good now, Timothy! have you enquired what is become of cousin Betty all this day—and her companion, her little gossiping tittle-tattle friend——Hah, Timothy?

Shackle. An' it shall please your worship's worship, after the most painful inquisition in pursuance of your worship's commands, I am not able to discover what your worship might——

Sir John. Pr'ythee don't worship me so much, but

for form sake, Timothy, tell me whither they are gone.

Shackle. Really that I cannot say, but the two young ladies were seen to walk forth early this morning with our very wise neighbour, farmer Freehold.

Sir John. So! but they left word they would return.

Shackle. I am not able particularly to affirm so much.

Sir John. Now the pox take thee, for a formal Anno Domini blockhead.

Tim. Give me leave to assure your worship, that without form or order——

Sir John. Tell me where they are gone, or I'll break thy strange pate.

Tim. Really, if your worship bruises me to death, I shall most willingly perish for the truth, nor will I discover more unto your worship than I know.

Sir John. Get out o' my sight, you confounded multiplication puppy; yet stay a little; this fellow ruffles me so every day with his most abominable *circumbendibus* phrases—Well, cousin Betty is a fine girl, she has two thousand pounds a year.—Ah, if my nephew Dick were not the most profligate rogue—But he may reform one time or other; she will never marry without my advice, that is certain.—Hark thee, thou numerical coxcomb; enquire if they expect the girls home at supper; I'll take a turn or two in the hall. [Exeunt.

Enter LURCH and four of his creditors as the equipage of a Nobleman, and VULTUR as his running footman.

Sneak. Laud, my heart sinks : I sweat and tremble already ; I shall never hold out.

Carb. You pin-hearted puppy, recall your courage, or I'll demolish you. What, wou'd you ruin our whole affair ?

Sneak. Well, dear Carbuncle, be peaceable, I will strive.

Lurch. Tom Vultur, how does his grace become me ? does the man of quality sit easy on the rake ?

Vult. Admirably ! you look as if you were made for a blue ribbon.

Lurch. And you flatter me as if I wore one—To business, lads, to business—Do you, Tom Vultur, you who represent my running footman, trot before and prepare the old knight to receive us. If I can carry my design in this habit and equipage—— [*Exit Vult.*

Carb. We'll drink, and wench, and roar eternally ; our whole lives shall run round in a circle of mirth.

Lurch. Joy shall be the jack, pleasure the bias, and we'll roll after happiness to the last moment of life.

Carb. Without one rub in the carpet, boys.

Long. With your favour, 'squire, how comes this Sir John English, who treats and entertains all, and is so very proud of being hospitable, to take no care of you ? You say, you never personally offended him.

Lurch. Never ; but I'll tell you : my father, his sis-

ter's husband, died two thousand pounds in his debt, for which he religiously determined to punish me his heir. At my father's death I was ten years old, but from that time no intercession could prevail with this most obstinate mule so much as to see me. But we have no time to lose in words—Come on, my boys, now let us give order for the coach to drive gently up the hill—By this time Sir John, I hope, is ready to receive us. *[Exeunt.]*

Sir JOHN ENGLISH walking in his hall: VULTUR comes blowing in as a running footman.

Vult. Hoh—Phu! phu! with your pardon, Sir, with your pardon; phu! phu!

Sir John. How now, pumps, dimity, and sixty miles a day, whose greyhound are you?

Vult. Phu! phu! do you know, or can you give me any information? phu!

Sir John. Stand still and breathe, puppy; I'll walk a turn or two till your bellows are in order.

Vult. Can you tell me, I say, if my lord duke be come in yet?

Sir John. Thy lord duke! pr'ythee who is thy Lord Duke, friend?

Vult. I thought every body knew my Lord: his Grace the Duke of Gasconade; his youngest son bears the title of Lord Bite, and his eldest is Marquis of Bamington by the courtesy of England.

Sir John. Art sure he will alight here? I shou'd be

proud to entertain his grace; but I fear thou art mistaken.

Vult. Do you think so, Sir? By your leave, Sir. *[Going.*

Sir John. Passion o' my fellow; why Pumps, I say, come back.

Vult. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Sir John. How happy should I be to entertain his grace. Did not his grace name the house with the great turret o' top?

Vult. No, Sir, no!

Sir John. Nor did not you hear him mention the velvet cushions in my little parlour?—Nor my large gilt candlesticks?

Vult. Upon my honour, no.

Sir John. Your honour, scab!—Nor no word dropt about the hangings in the great chamber?

Vult. Not a word. *[Running off, Sir John holds him.*

Sir John. A pox confine thee! This fellow was born with a whirligig in his heels. Stand still, you lousy seven miles an hour rascal.

Vult. If you stop me a second longer you ruin me.

Sir John. Was there no talk of a plentiful board, open house-keeping, and the good old English hospitality reviv'd somewhere hereabout?—hah!

Vult. Now you come a little nearer the matter.

Sir John. But now in one word—and indeed a question I should have ask'd before—Whom did he send you to?

Vult. To Sir John English, Sir,

Sir John. I am he, you round-about knave, you skip-ditch, I am Sir John English—Well, and will his grace be here?—I am overjoy'd—nobody; no, nobody of any degree or quality, that is to say—passes by the house—Nobody entertains like me—Well; well; well;—there is a kind of a grace, an art, a manner in these things, which so naturally slips from me—Godso, I forget myself—Where are my servants? John Pippin, John!

Serv. Did your worship call?

Sir John. Bid that figurative fool Timothy Shackle-figure, Robin Marrowbone the cook, and Double-jugg the butler, and Dorothy and Cicely, and all my servants, come hither instantly, I must speak with them all—Here, give this fustian rascal a horn o' beer and a crust—Well, and how does his grace, good now? I never saw him in my life.

Vult. My lord has travell'd these five years, an' it please your good worship.

Sir John. Travell'd! good now!--A cup o' beer and a crust, there. The fellow's a fool, I think.

Enter Steward, Cook, Butler, CICELY and DOROTHY.

Sir John. Here Marrowbone, Robin, Robin, some tame ducks, a virgin pullet, a few pigeons, a bit of mutton, or something or other---Dorothy, air the great chamber, Dorothy, the fine sheets for his grace's bed: you understand me? The Holland curtains for the damask bed, edg'd with point: up with 'em; up

with 'em :--unpaper the screens, the sconces, and the andirons.

[As Sir John gives orders to his Servants, Vultur and another Servant are drinking and complimenting on one side.]

Enter Servant.

Serv. An' it please your worship, there's a nobleman and all his servants just alighted at the great gate.

Sir John. Codso ; codso ; we shall be in a fearful hurry---“ set my band, Dorothy”---quickly, quickly---So, there, there--- His grace, I profess, has surprised me, taken me so unprepared.

Enter LURCHER as a Duke, with his equipage ; runs up to Sir JOHN, and salutes him.

Lurch. Sir John English, I am your most faithful and obedient servant : I could by no means have excused myself, if I had passed by, and not paid my respects here.

Sir John. A dog-hole, may it please your grace, a mere dog-hole ; I have a clean bed or so, a bottle or two of good wine for a particular ; I brew with the best malt, and can pretend to a bit of good mutton, or so---We shall starve your grace---but your grace's goodness---

Lurch. Ever hearty Sir John, the happiest creature breathing (that is your character) when your friends are round you.

Sir John. Good now ! good now ! your grace is

pleasant----Will your grace taste a glass of old hock---with a little, little dash of palm, before you eat?

Lurch. By no means, Sir John. Upon my word, you have a fine country round you, a noble estate.

Sir John. No, no, no, my Lord; what with taxes, repairs, bad tenants, parish charges, and so forth; a poor pittance---a poor pittance!---Will your grace have a Seville orange squeez'd into a glass of noble racy old canary? What does your grace think of that? Aye, I believe that---or a glass of your right South-am cyder, sweetened with a little old mead, and a hard toast?

Lurch. Not one drop before I eat, tho' you could treat me with liquid gold. Why you live here as if all things were in common without labour or money, like Adam in Paradise.

Sir John. Yes, an it please your grace, with all my beasts about me. I have a heart, that is all I can boast; I have a heart. Well, well---what news? What news at London? I have a nephew there---I have not seen the profligate these ten years. I beg your grace not to intreat for him, his father served me scurvily; no, no; what o' that? what o' that?

Enter a Servant with sack and toast on a salver.

Your grace must taste one glass of sack, 'tis the custom o' the place; it will warm your stomach. Come, come-----Ah, this nephew of mine has been a wild lad, very wild.

“ *Lurch.* So I have heard.”

Sir John. Belike your grace might know him, for he kept company o’ the best. Ah, who but Dick Lurcher! Well, he has, tho’ he be but my sister’s son, much of my blood in him, that he has. “ Does
“ your grace understand music ?

“ *Lurch.* I have but a bad ear.”

Sir John. “ This nephew o’ mine has been in comic
“ pranks—Oh, very wild, very wild—but” he is like
to have all when I die. The whoreson shall have all
---I love him—but he shall never find it while I live.

“ *Lurch.* What a temptation is here to poison him !
“ How he draws his own picture. [*Aside.*

“ *Sir John.* He is, yet, my Lord, but as I may
“ say *imberbis juvenis*, no more hair on his chin than a
“ midwife. Will your grace eat an oyster or two be-
“ fore supper ?

“ *Lurch.* I never do eat oysters.

“ *Sir John.* Never eat oysters! Good now! good
“ now! That is wonderful!”

Lurch. ’Tis something “ more” wonderful, that
you can dote upon this nephew of yours, and make
no provision for him. Has he any fortune of his
own ?

Sir John. Not a shilling, Sir. All spent. Do you
mark me? Laud! he, Sir! why he is a wit, and a
rake, and a gamester; he has twenty trades besides
women. O’ my conscience he lives upon women.
The boy has a fine eye; *he has my eye.* He shall not
have a groat while I live—but when I die——

Lurch. I must have a small matter while you live, dear uncle. [Aside.

Sir John. What's your grace's pleasure? My ears did not rightly lay hold on your last words.

Lurch. I say, you should allow him a small matter while you live.

Sir John. No, no; let him look out sharp; sharp; he will know better how to manage when I am laid.

“ *Lurch.* Do you never steal up to court, Sir John?

“ *Sir John.* Ah, my Lord Duke, I was very fond of it once—I have danced a hornpipe in the drawing-room before now, I have.

“ *Lurch.* Have you no inclination to a little snug place, or so?

“ *Sir John.* Ay, my good Lord, if it might be done without much trouble——hunting of places is too much fatigue; 'tis fit for young people. I can't play at puss in the corner now; no, no.

“ *Lurch.* Ay, but a teller, a commissioner in the customs, or so, would do you no harm.

“ *Sir John.* No, no; if I might be but deputy-lieutenant; that indeed, I——

“ *Lurch.* I'll speak to the king, it shall be done—you are so reasonable——”

Sir John. Come, come, good now, I see supper is going thro' the hall. Will your grace give me leave? Do you hear, take care his grace's equipage want nothing. I will shew your grace the way. [Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter LURCHER and his Equipage.

Lurcher.

So, now to our business, friends. "Come, come, the vizards." Where are the masking suits?

"*Carb.* Here, here in the portmanteau, my boy of mettle."

Lurch. Well, gentlemen, I beg leave only to repeat what I said before, be honest and you shall all be safe, have every penny that I owe, and a present into the bargain; but you'll hang yourselves and me too if you purloin a sixpence. I have a particular reason for this sham robbery, which will help me to execute my design with honour and safety.

Carb. Oh, I'll be very honest; don't suspect me, my little bully.

Long. Indeed, 'Squire, this way of robbing is quite out of our way.

Sneak. I do not like it, 'tis so like robbing. Dear Squire, turn me out of the house—We shall certainly be taken and hanged.

Lurch. Carbuncle, bind all fast: terrify much and hurt little, that's your way.

Carb. Well, well, we'll do our best.

Lurch. Now, ceremonious, uncle, with your good worship's leave, I hope to borrow from your awkward generosity a little ready money, however.

“ ’Tis strange this old man would upon no account
 “ lend to supply the necessities of his nephew—nay,
 “ of a nephew he seems to love too---he will readily
 “ pay down to the glare of his grace.” But to business, my friends, to business; you all know your several appointments; away. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Changes. Enter VULTUR with a pistol, thrusting in SHACKLEFIGURE in his shirt and breeches.

Vult. Your money, your money, dog-bolt.

Tim. Really I never part with money without a receipt.

Vult. You rascal, a receipt! when did you ever hear of a receipt given by a gentleman of our profession?

Tim. Dear Sir, only let it be then by way of memorandum, that it may appear in my accounts, and that his worship may be satisfied what you shall receive of me in a violent manner.

Vult. Villain, mention one word more of your memorandums and accounts, and I’ll shoot you thro’ the head for understanding arithmetic. Oons, Sir, the nine figures are all authorised thieves.

Tim. No, Sir, with all submission, they are not thieves, but guardians of estates.

Vult. Dog-bolt! must I drive a pellet through your scull to confound your figures?

Tim. Ah, Sir, I do not insist upon it——Ah, spare my life, and I'll confess all the money and the plate.

Vult. In, in then, dismal, and I'll give you bond for the money. [Exeunt.]

Enter CARBUNCLE, *haling* DOUBLEJUGG *after him, very drunk, and SNEAK and LONGBOTTOM at a distance.*

Doub. Are you not ashamed to bind an honest man hand and foot, who can neither stand nor go?

Carb. Rot you, do you prate?

Doub. Yes, Sir, I'm given to talk in my cups.

Carb. Where's your plate, you drunken sot, your plate?

Doub. My plate, Sir, why, [Hiccups] why it is, it is——

Carb. Where is it?

Doub. Why it is—to tell you the truth it is locked up.

Carb. Demme, the keys, or I'll slice October.

Sneak. I beg you, Sir, to make no resistance, I entreat you.

Long. Upon my soul, Sir, if you don't comply with our request, you will be very roughly treated.

Doub. I thank you very kindly, but I don't care for drinking a drop more.

Carb. Give me the keys of the cellar, or by Gogmagog I'll slice you, hash you, carbonade you, pickle you, pepper you, salt you, broil you, and eat you.

Doub. Keep your temper, friend; there they are.

I suppose you have a mind to draw your own liquor——Let me recommend the third hogshead on the right——Ay, that was the hogshead that John and I stuck to to-night; 'tis fine, smooth, mellow, stinging liquor.

Carb. Here, lace the sot's arms, and turn him into the buttery again. [Exit Carbuncle.

Doub. Do your pleasures with me, honest gentlemen; tho' it runs strangely in my head that I shall dream of thieves. [Exit Doub. led by Sneak and Long.

Enter LURCHER and CARBUNCLE, with Sir JOHN bound in an old fashioned night-gown and cap, and the rest of the equipage of LURCHER.

Sir John. Gentlemen——for heaven's sake, gentlemen——'tis very well; I am bound hard enough.

Lurch. Death, Sir, your money. We come for money.

Sir John. Is that all you come for? Why what a beast was I to unfurnish myself, to put out my money but yesterday? Alas, poor gentlemen! What shift shall I make for you? Pray call again some other time when I may be better provided.

Lurch. Oons, Sir, don't trifle——your money.

Carb. Brimstone and fire---What do you bam us?

Sir John. No, Sir, pardon me, I don't bam you. If you had come, as they say, in a civil way---Fie upon't, a gentleman would scorn to rob a house in such a manner.

Lurch. Clap a gag in his mouth there——What do

you suffer the old dog to chatter for?---Pluck out his tongue—or knock his teeth down his throat with an ounce of lead.

Carb. Furies and firebrands---what do you bam us, you old prig?

Sir John. I don't, dear Sir: Ah dear, sweet Sir, I do not, I do not bam you---only---and if it were your honours' good pleasures, I would intreat you for some small civility---I have a man of quality in my house, and I would not for the world that his grace should be disturbed.

Lurch. Thunder and lightning, Sir---Do you imagine we have any respect for a lord---no, no, we have secured his grace, he and all his equipage are bound to their good behaviour, I can tell you that.

Sir John. Who? my Lord! What have you bound his grace?---Irreparably lost, ruined, undone---I'll have you all hanged---I'll never forgive you. What! bound his grace! Ill-mannered brutes, to “misuse and” disturb a man of quality; and in my house, too.

Lurch. Carry him in, bind him to the couch in the bed-chamber, and if he is noisy gag him.

[*Exit Sir John, guarded by Carbuncle.*
So, this is virtue indeed; virtue deserving a reward, to have power to do wrong and not use it; “’tis being chaste under temptation, that gives merit even to saints.”—Well, gentlemen, preserve your honours as you have begun, and you'll all deserve statues. Now to our business; let one of us bind all the rest; do you mind me, about it then---for, harkee,

'tis absolutely necessary that this nobleman and all his followers should be found bound in their beds.

Vult. Admirable! that will secure us from all suspicion; but if we bind one another, how will the last man be bound?

Lurch. Why you, Vultur, shall escape; you may be supposed well enough, like a drowsy footman, to be forgot in your litter; there's your excuse---but so soon as ever you have bound us, whip off your mask and your mantle, and unbind the knight. Let me see, 'tis now break of day; to business, to business, lads.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Sir JOHN's Bed-chamber. Sir JOHN bound to a couch.

Sir John. What---help---help---Thieves! Murder! Will nobody come near me? Well, well, if there's any virtue in hemp I'll have these rogues hanged. At such a time as this to disturb the tranquillity of his grace's slumbers, as I may so say. Ay, ay, I am bound fast enough. The condition of this obligation-----

Enter VULTUR.

Odso, Pumps---how comest thou to escape, Pumps? I am heartily glad to see thee in troth.

Vult. They left me snoring in the garret, and ei-

ther they did not see or regard me——Pray let me assist your worship.

Sir John. Would I had lain in the garret too---But nothing afflicts me so much, honest Geometrical, as the affront in binding his grace. Ah, that cuts my heart. [*Vultur loosing Sir John.*] So, so; very well, very well. How shall I approach my Lord? I am not able to look him in the face.

Enter LURCHER, with his hands bound, as from his chamber.

Lurch. Who's there?

Sir John. Good-morrow to your grace.

Lurch. Good-morrow, Sir John; I would give you my hand, but I can't command it. I suppose, Sir, this is the courtesy of the country.

[*Sir John unbinds him.*]

Sir John. Alas, alas, this grieves me more than all, to see your grace thus uncourteously used.

Lurch. Can you guess who they may be, Sir John?

Sir John. I don't know, an' it please your grace---but sure they were the most ungentleman-like thieves——

Lurch. These fellows were some who know and use your house, I warrant.

Sir John. Very like, very like! Well, well, this comes of keeping open house.

Lurch. I made myself known to one of them, and gave him my honour I would not discover him.

Sir John. You did, my Lord?

Lurch. Yes; and do you think the insolent slave would trust me upon my word?

Sir John. He would not?

Lurch. No, faith, he asked my pardon; he told me lords' promises were mortal, and commonly died in the birth, or soon after.

Sir John. Insupportable villains! "How terribly they belched out oaths, my Lord! Did you observe the whiskers of the red-nosed fellow?"

"*Lurch.* Ay, very well; they were loaded with gunpowder instead of snuff; I expected every moment to see them take fire at his red nose, and blow his head off his shoulders."

"*Sir John.* Ha, ha! your grace is pleasant."

"*Lurch.* To be plain, I fear you fared the worse for me; they had certainly some notice of my being here."

"*Sir John.* Ah, my good Lord Duke! I am sure your grace fared the worse. Does not your grace feel a little oddly about the brawn of your wrist?"

"*Lurch.* Yes, Sir, a sort of numbness—the ligament, Sir John, stopped the circulation."

"*Sir John.* Confound them! if I meet with the rascals, it will be my turn, my lord, to stop the circulation."

Vult. I am sorry your grace has lost—

[*To Lurcher.*

Sir John. Hush, hush. [To *Vult.* *aside.*

Lurch. What have I lost? Speak!

Sir John. A good night's rest, say. [To *Vult.*

Vult. Your rest, my lord, this troublesome night.

Lurch. That's true; no matter. My clothes there. I'll into my chamber and dress, and wait on you immediately, Sir John. [Exit.

[Sir John stops Vultur as he is following him.

Sir John. Harkee, friend, what has thy lord duke lost? Speak softly.

Vult. No more than his grace may easily spare.

Sir John. That is not the thing. Pray tell me.

Vult. Since your worship will needs know, they took about three hundred pieces of gold, and one hundred pounds in silver, or thereabouts, out of his Grace's strong box.

Sir John. Codso—Codso——“What! How! there
“is but one way—it must be done.”——Ay, ay—my honour is concerned.——I charge you, I command you don't let his grace know it—Pray bid my steward Timothy come to me; 'tis fit I repair him. What! in my house!

Enter TIMOTHY.

Tim. So please your worship, Thomas Maunder hath sent your worship the two hundred pounds for the renewing of his lease.

Sir John. Villains! traitors——

Tim. And John Budge hath paid his Martlemas rent in arrear, and sent your worship the turkies.

Sir John. Coxcomb, to trouble me with business now. Come hither, Timothy, what have I lost in this scurvy affair here?

Tim. Really, upon the strictest inquisition I cannot

find that your worship has lost the value of one single sixpence in the whole affair.

Sir John. What dost thou say? I am amazed.

Tim. 'Tis truth---upon a second casting I find all my cash is numerically the same as it was last night---and Doublejugg hath all his plate I can assure your worship; there is not a tea-spoon missing---I believe their design was wholly upon his grace.

Sir John. Poltroons! ragamuffins! as if their whole scheme was purposely to affront him, and him only
---“ My house too! Codso, I am so perplexed I
“ know not what to do.” Why it looks, Timothy, as if I were in the plot. Harkee, Timothy, what ready money is there in the house?

Tim. Three hundred pounds in silver, and two hundred pounds in gold.

Sir John. I could wish you had three hundred pounds in gold---Well, well, we must make shift. Do you hear, take the two hundred pieces of gold and two hundred pounds in silver presently, and watch carefully---carefully, I say, for an opportunity to slip it into his grace's strong box privately; tho', Timothy, you must do it privately.

Tim. What would your worship slip it into his Grace's strong box did you say? What must I slip?

Sir John. The money, oaf, the money, I say; the same sum to a farthing. I charge you let no creature see you.

Tim. Give me leave, in the shortest method imaginable, to reason this affair.

Sir John. Codso ! let me have you do it instantly
——What the good year——

Tim. I say only that your worship has lost something that I did not apprehend before, and that is your senses.

Sir John. Impudent varlet ; do it, or I'll turn your mathematical countenance out of my doors this moment——[*Exit Timothy.*] “ In truth, in very truth,
“ it must be done, and it shall be done, though I sell
“ my whole estate---’tis fit he should be repaired
“ ——This is the most happy opportunity.”
What, in my house !

Enter LURCHER and VULTUR.

Lurch. I overheard him just now ; he ordered his steward to place that sum in my strong box, in the room of what he supposed I had lost.

Vult. He did so, the same exactly, only more silver than gold.

Lurch. He prevents my wishes ; anticipates my designs. This old gentleman has a generous mind, and however he is disposed to me, there’s something great and open in his character. This manner of treatment makes me even disrelish the success of my enterprise---Ha, here he comes, I tremble at the sight of him now.

Vult. “ Collect yourself, man, remember your
“ character, harden your face in the fire of your im-
“ pudence : let not a muscle start, nor a drop of
“ blood steal from your heart to tell tales in your

“ face. Look as if your power gave authority to
“ your actions, and you were really what you appear
“ only.”---See, see, Sir John moves towards you.

Lurch. Sir John, your most obedient; I am infinitely obliged to you for the favours I have received. ---I am sorry my affairs oblige me to leave you so soon.

Sir John. You cover me with blushes---Yet your grace will, you must do me the honour to take a short homely meal before you travel.

Lurch. I roll away thirty miles before dinner, Sir.

Sir John. Just snatch a bit, as they say---What, Robin! Tim!

Lurch. I shall run away abruptly, if you press me.

Sir John. If your grace will have it so---Yet let me perish, my lord, if I know how to look your grace in the face about the business of last night---’Tis presumption in me to ask forgiveness.

Lurch. I forgive you from my soul, Sir John: upon my honour I do; I am sensible how much you suffer every way.

Sir John. Then I remain to the extremest moment of this frail life your grace’s humble debtor.

Lurch. I fear, Sir John, I shall be obliged to trespass upon your faith for the credit of some ready money to carry me home; this accident has quite unfurnished me, it seems.

[Enter Longbottom, who whispers Vultur.

Sir John. Your grace may command me entirely, and I am proud-----

Vult. My lord, John came in just now to tell me, that as they were about to pack up the strong box they found all your grace's money within it. [*To Lurcher.*

Lurch. How ! I am surprised ; indeed ! the money within it !

Vult. Only the species changed, and one hundred pounds in silver more instead of gold.

Lurch. How ! I can hardly believe it ! what, are we in fairy land here, Sir John ?

[*Vultur whispers Lurcher.*

Sir John. I am afraid Timothy did not take due care. [*Aside.*

Lurch. I suspected it, truly---Sir John, this is unkind---my servant tells me your steward was observed to place the money there, and when he was examined, said he did it by your order---You see I would make use of my credit with you : I should not have been put to any inconvenience by my lodging here---generous Sir John---Well, since it is so, give me leave, however, to give you security for the money, and three months hence, when I return from the north, I'll call and repay you.

Sir John. By no means, you confound me, you kill me with confusion ; what, is not your grace's honour sufficient ?

Lurch. But we are all mortal, you know.

Sir John. Dear your grace, excuse me---Dear your grace, spare me.

Lurch. Well, Sir, I am your humble debtor ; if ever you come to court again-----

Sir John. Ah, my lord!

Lurch. Is the coach ready?

Vult. 'Tis at the gate, my lord.

Lurch. Sir John, yours—Pray take particular care next time a man of quality lies in your house, that no thieves disturb him.

Sir John. Ah, my good lord!

Lurch. Not a step further.

Sir John. Pray give me the honour to attend your grace to your coach.

Lurch. No, no, by no means.

Sir John. 'Tis my duty---Good your grace.

Lurch. You will be obeyed---Remember only when I see you at Bamington---I shall command in my turn.

Sir John. Your grace overwhelms me with your goodness. [Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter MODELY and HEARTWELL.

Modely.

WAS ever any thing so agreeable?

Heart. What palace could have entertained us like this cottage?

Mode. The blunt old man gave us a meal, plain and undisguised.

Heart. Artless and honest, like himself. Did you

observe the sweetness and purity of this little dwelling?—The linen smelt of lavender and roses—The honey-suckles hid the light of our small casement—

Mode. And mix'd their odours with the sharp morning air, and waked me early.

Heart. Why, did you sleep?

Mode. Like a whipt top. Did not you?

Heart. Ah, no; my heart was dancing the galloping nag; my spirits were in arms, and all the mobility of my blood roared out incessantly, Flora, Flora.

Mode. What! then you are really in love; that is, à la Romanski.

Heart. So much in love, “Modely, as any of those old-fashioned heroes were ever feigned to be, whose names stand in blank verse upon record, and sigh by their representatives from generation to generation.”

“*Mode.* How do you know?

“*Heart.* Oh, by a thousand symptoms;” my heart beats quick at her name; I have her constantly before my eyes; “fortune, fame, friendship, honour, women, are in less value with me, when compared with her; all the faculties of my soul and body are her slaves; I could live in a cave everlastingly with her alone;” I could fight for her, I could die for her, I could marry her.

Mode. What, you have a mind to put your passion

to a violent death. Marry her!—Do so, do so; 'tis a certain cure.

Heart. Be not so severe; her beauty, George, will make my joys immortal.

Mode. I can't believe either in the immortality of her beauty or your passion.

Heart. Look on her then, and be converted.

Mode. Convert thyself, lad, and don't look so like the picture of heigh-ho! “in the frontispiece of Cupid's kalendar. Adieu.” [Exit.

Enter FLORA.

Flora. My uncle, Sir, would speak with you—Nay, no more love, I intreat, I petition. I know by your looks what you mean. Come, leave this whimsical dumb cant of sighing and ogling, and tell me, in plain English, what you'd have.

Heart. Could not you help one to a little ready beauty?

Flora. What would you give for a small purchase that way?

Heart. Heart for heart, my dear.

Flora. That was the old way, they say. Before money was in fashion, they used to barter in kind.

Heart. Let us renew that honest custom in the age of innocence and love.

Flora. Have you a clear title to the thing you would sell? That heart of yours, I warrant, has been mortgaged over and over.

Heart. Humph! It has been a little dipped; but I have always honourably redeemed it, child.

Flora. Have you a lawful assignment from your last mistress?

Heart. I was as free as air till I beheld those eyes.

[*Bowing very low.*]

Flora. Ah, that humble, killing bow!--Go on. Now I know you are to talk of chains, and daggers, and flames, and dying, and darts.

Heart. Is it possible to hide a passion, which, tho' my tongue is silent, breaks out in every look and motion?

Flora. Wonderful pretty this! But, Sir, I know the natural whirl of the mind of man; 'tis as inconstant as a turn-stile, his heart's a tennis-ball, his inclination's the racket, and his passions drive it round the world.

Heart. Dare only to try me, and if you like me not, discharge me.

Flora. She deserves to be robbed, who takes a servant that brings a certificate of his being a thief.

Heart. 'Tis not engraven here, I hope.

Flora. Yes, truly, there is a sort of faithless, loving, London, lying air, that hangs upon your features, and frightens me terribly.

Heart. Then propose your own security; bind me as you please.

Flora. Agreed. Suppose then I liked you well enough to make a husband of you; would you marry me?—Look ye there——confounded——astonished at

once—Mentioning the word only, has put the man into a cold sweat, I profess.

Heart. People who marry for love, my dear, are like those who give bonds with interest for large sums of ready money, and squander the principal; so in a little time are both beggars and prisoners.

Flora. I had rather be a beggar afterwards, than a bubble beforehand. But go on to your purpose, Sir.

Heart. I would have you leave this sour old man, and this rustic cot, and take your flight with me and love---Love shall conduct us with his purple wings, joys shall meet joys in circles, and new pleasures chase the swift hours away. Thou shalt be dearer to me than any wife can be; “every moment of our lives shall be “beyond the wedding-nights of the dull vulgar.”

Flora. So, 'tis out at last. What, then I am to be your mistress only, your pretty bella favorita, your little private hunting-seat; have every inconvenience of a wife, with the scandal of a wench, and perhaps be forced to cluck a brood of illegal chickens after me, and peck about the parish for my subsistence?

Heart. What horrible ideas dost thou form! No, my dear, it shall not be within my power to wrong you; I will settle two hundred pounds a year upon you for life, and provide for all our children.

Flora. With a sham lawyer, and a counterfeit settlement.

Heart. Choose your own lawyer, take your own security, make your own trustees; you shall have an

inheritance in my heart, and my land as firm as if you were born to it.

Flora. To be serious, then, since you are so, I'll tell you, all the inheritance I boast or wish for, is this low, humble cottage, and a mind, I hope a virtuous mind, that cannot, even in this situation, bear dishonour. Take back your worthless trifle of a heart, and your more worthless promises, and know, I scorn as much to yield to the mean bargain of your hireling passion, as you do to submit to honourable love.

[*Going.*

Heart. Stay, you shall stay---Let me but think a moment——

Flora. Think then, ungrateful man, what 'tis you do. My father, whose prop I am, the stay of his old age, taught me, with pious care, to tread the paths of virtue: how would it tear the strings of his old heart to see me fallen at once to shame and infamy! You call yourself a gentleman, and say, the laws of faith and honour, when they're broken, ask life for recompence: the lie is death; yet you would falsify your trust to him, defraud him of his treasure in his child, inhospitably murder your good host, the man whose house you entered with a trust that would to common thieves, under these limitations, be sacred and inviolable.

Heart. Oh, thou hast touch'd my soul! I feel thy words; a conscious pang stabs thro' my heart, and covers me with shame. Yet, Flora, yet I hope you will forgive me, when you think how strongly we are bias-

ed to what is wrong. Custom, family, fortune, I know not what terrible words, make me fear to suffer in opinion only.

Flora. I know the disparity of our fortunes; I know you fear your family and name should suffer. Believe me, Sir, they suffer more when you but tempt an honest mind from virtue.

Heart. Oh, Flora, Flora, thou hast conquered! I own my crime, and humbly beg you will forgive it. Thy words, bright excellence, charm like thy beauty; thy soul's refined without society or courts; nature has form'd thee fair as her own humble lilies; no family can mend, no education teach, no habit improve your manners.

Flora. "Oh, man, for flatt'ry and deceit renown'd!"

Heart. In you I see the most perfect virtue clothed in all the charms of the most elegant form; in you I see all that we know of heaven, of those celestial lights that move for ever, virtue and beauty joined. Thus let me kneel, thus lowly at your feet, and ask your hand, your hand and heart in marriage; let the priest now join us. Will you, dare you trust your convert?

Flora. Away with this! Think seriously, seriously, Sir. Can you for ever love me, for your life? A poor country girl, without a portion, without one penny for posterity? Take time, and think on't.

Heart. I would marry thee, tho' I wrought with my

hands for thy daily support. My whole soul, all my wishes, are centered in thee.

Flora. Ay, but when we are married they'll move eccentrically again. Marriage is a tedious journey in a heavy road; many an honest fellow, who set out briskly at first, has been heartily tired before he reached his inn at night.

Heart. I must not, cannot, will not live without thee. "No hero in romance, no shepherd in pastoral, no poet's imagination, was ever more in love. "Can you deny me?" Give me your hand; let me be yours for ever.

Flora. Come, Sir, I see you're a man of courage, and if my uncle consents——

Heart. I'll go in, and ask it without ceasing——
But shall I then be sure of yours?

Flora. I don't know——But I think you do what you will with me. [*Exeunt.*

Enter MODELY.

Mode. I can't imagine where Heartwell is gone, nor can I find the girls. I have hunted every—— Ha, Miss! have I caught you.

Enter AURA.

Aura. Sir, the tea is ready.

Mode. Tea! Why, you live within doors as politely as the people of our world, as elegantly. This cottage is like a diamond in the quarry, all rough with-

out, within all light and beauty. Does your father drink tea too?

Aura. No, Sir, his constant breakfast is a pipe and a pot of October. “He hates your soup-maigre of
“element and herbs; he rails at the women for send-
“ing to t’other world for their cups and their break-
“fasts; and says more reputations have been broke
“over our tea-tables than China dishes. In short,
“that our sex is all China ware, fair and frail, and
“never flaw’d till used.

“*Mode.* This severity in old age is not disagreea-
“ble; it becomes him, and is, like his own October,
“sharp and sound.

“*Aura.*” But he expects us all this while. [*Going.*

Mode. Hold, hold! Why, do you think I’ll be served in this manner?

Aura. What manner?

Mode. How well you kept your appointment last night, gipsy!

Aura. What appointment?

Mode. To meet me in the arbor at the lower end of the orchard, alone.

Aura. Pleasant! I meet a man at night in an arbor alone! Oh, hideous! What should I do there?

Mode. Do! Why, I was to have made love to you in soft nonsense, you were to have been very angry and very kind, and so I was to have ravished you with your own consent, that’s all. Ah! a blush upon a half consent looks so sweetly by moon-light.

Aura. How came this wicked imagination into your head?

Mode. In a dream, deary; 'tis pity it was not real.

Aura. Go, you're a devil.

Mode. You're an angel.

Aura. Begone—I fly thee, Satan— [*Exit running.*]

Mode. I'll follow thee to the world's end, thou temptation for a saint. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

*The Green before the Cottage. Enter HEARTWELL, FLORA, and several Countrymen and Women, “dressed
“as from a wedding, a blind old fidler before them,
“one of the country fellows singing the following catch:*

“He that marries a lass

“For love and a face,

“Without money, is still in a pitiful case:

“Or he that for money alone

“Puts a wedding ring

“On an ugly rich thing,

“Does but tie himself scurvily down:

“But he that has money and love in good store,

“Has all the world in a string.

*“1 Count. Come, neighbours, we'll dance at the
“squire's wedding, as they say'n, till the sun rise
“upon us, and stare us out o' countenance.*

“ 2 Count. Ah, how she do look, Dick ! there will be merry work anon, i’ fackins.

“ 1 Count. Come, lead up, Clody ; thou art so full of prate and waggery, as they sayn. [*A dance.*”

Heart. My good neighbours, I thank you all for these favours. I hope you’ll dine with me to-morrow. I beg you’ll excuse me now. In the mean time, here is something to drink this lady’s health.

[*Exeunt all but Heartwell and Flora.*

My wife !——my dear !——I am now richer than the sea ; I have a treasure in thee more valuable than what the earth contains. “ Oh, my love ! my heart
“ at thy sight feels an ecstatic gaiety, a joy that enlarges and opens my mind, and throws a prospect
“ before me of lasting happiness.

“ *Flora.* To keep alive this passion will be now all
“ my ambition, the very extent of my best hopes. I
“ blush to say, my only fears were lest I should have
“ lost you. But my uncle will impatiently expect
“ us ; he will hardly believe we are married, till he
“ sees the voucher, the certificate, or the parson.”

Enter SHACKLEFIGURE.

“ *Heart.*” How now ! what solemn piece of formality, what man of wires is this, that moves towards us ? He stirs by clock-work, like St. Dunstan’s giants ; he prepares to open his mouth, as if he could not speak without an order of court.

Shack. Save you, right worshipful Sir.

Heart. And you eke also, “and send you salt
“enough with your tears to scour away your sins.”

Shack. Sir John English, my most bountiful lord
and master, hearing by the mouth of common fame—

Heart. Common fame is a common liar, friend;
you have your news from the worst hands.

Shack. Sir, you break the thread of my discourse.

Heart. Well, join it again, and go on.

Shack. Sir John English, my most bountiful lord
and master, hearing by the mouth of common fame,
that you were joined in holy wedlock to the niece of
his good tenant, Solomon Freehold, sends his wishes
ambassadors by me, the humblest of his vassals, that
you and your fair bride will be pleased to sup and con-
summate your marriage at his house.

Heart. Verily, thou hast well unfolded thy message;
now plait it up carefully again, friend, and give my
service to thy master Sir John, and say, that my wishes
are to be private for a night or two.

Shack. Sir, I shall report---or carry back your an-
swer accordingly,

Flora. Stay, friend, stay a moment---[*To Heart.*]
If I could prevail upon you, you should grant Sir
John's request.

Heart. 'Twill interrupt our happiness. Noise is an
enemy to transport. I am so covetous, I would have
thee for ever alone.

Flora. But Sir John has always been to me the most
obliging, kindest, best-natured man; at this time it
would look like ingratitude to refuse him. Give me
my request; 'tis the first I ever made. I'll go before,

and prepare the old gentleman to receive you, and prevent all ceremonious trouble. You'll be there in an hour.

Heart. I can deny thee nothing. Tell your master I'll wait on him. [*Exeunt Shack. and Flora.*]

Enter MODELY.

Ha, George! I was looking for you. What shall I do? You shall advise me. Shall I marry my dear little girl, or no?

Mode. To marry for love, my friend, is confining your whole body for the error of your eyes only.

Heart. Ay, but where one loves, one would keep a woman to one's self.

Mode. Ha, ha! keep a woman to one's self. He that purchases an estate where all the world take a right of common, may build churches for atheists, and alms-houses for misers.

Heart. But a little legal inclosure is for the comfort of our lives, when the land has been carefully and virtuously cultivated.

Mode. Why, you don't really intend to marry this girl?

Heart. Really, I believe I shall.

Mode. Indeed! Ah, pretty!—Do'e, do'e, fling two thousand pounds a year away upon a cottage, Marian—take the refuse of a bumpkin to your marriage-bed, and after that be the cuckold of the plowman.

Heart. How! What?

Mode. Ay, ten to one but some sinewy thresher, who has warmed her brisk blood at a hop or a wake,

steps into your place, and delivers down a posterity of young flail-drivers known by the name of Heartwell——

Heart. Fie, Modely! no more of this. You know her virtue is unsullied as her beauty; besides, her education has been above these clods.

Mode. Her education has been among them. But why should you marry her? Shew her some gold, man; promise her mountains, bargain for her, purchase her, run away with her, keep her two or three years, breed out of her—Why should you buy the whole piece, when you may have a suit for a sample? Wear her a little, and then——

Heart. Sir, I bore your base reflections with temper, while I believed your meaning was friendly; but now I find you indulge your ill-nature at the expence of a virtuous woman——

Mode. Oh, oh! you are grave—that is, you are growing mad indeed, and begin to rattle your matrimonial chain.

Heart. I am talking of religion to a heretic, of morals to a libertine.

Mode. Well, well, then it shall have its toy. Did it cry for a wife? It shall be tied to it, if nothing else will do; like an idiot with a horn book at his girdle. It shall have a gingerbread wife too, but without any gilding.

Heart. Pr'ythee, George, don't make me angry with thee in earnest.

Mode. What is the matter with the man? Art thou

mad? Thou art as uneasy as if thou wert already married, and had found the corn in the field, when you did not know the grain was sowed.

Heart. Why, then, to confess the honest truth, I am married.

Mode. Married! When?

Heart. Just now.

Mode. To whom?

Heart. To Flora.

Mode. Very good! And so you come to know, it seems, whether you shall give bond for the debt, when there's an execution upon the goods.

Heart. Well, George, but now you know my case, tell me, as a friend, only your opinion of what I have done.

Mode. Done! Pox, you have done a very silly thing; sold yourself for a waxen baby, a painted moppet, a gay, prating, party-coloured paraquito, which little master will play with till he is sick of it, and then in a gloomy mood be ready to twist its neck off. Ha, ha! a very pretty fellow, to make a vow to be always in the same mind. Oons! you look as if you walked upon your head, with your brains in your breeches.

Heart. Thou art so loose, thy imagination wonders what virtue is. There is no talking with thee. Come, go with me to Sir John's to supper, and be as much a wag there as you please.

Mode. No, I have other game in view—Farewell—Yonder she starts. Ay, there's a mademoiselle

I'll have cheaper ; she is not wicked enough yet to ask such an unconscionable price as matrimony. [*Exeunt.*]

MODELY *re-enters with AURA.*

Aura. Oh, lud ! you have brought all the blood in my body into my face.

Mode. Colour is the life of beauty. Can you be angry with me for making you more handsome ? I swear I will be ever faithful. Come, you little dear rogue ; you shall trust me.

Aura. Never, never. Oh, lud ! don't ask me. My heart beats as if it would break a way thro' my breast.

Mode. What, won't you trust me with a kiss ?

Aura. That's a trifle. [*Kissing her.*] You're impudent.

Mode. You're idle.

Aura. I swear I'll cry out.

Mode. You'll expose yourself.

Aura. Lud, Sir ! what do you mean ?

Mode. To wrestle for a fall only. There's a couch in the next room will tell no tales. This way, my dear--- [*Struggling.*] Nay, now you are a little fool.

Aura. [*Getting one hand loose, strikes him.*] I'll tear your eyes out.

“ *Mode.* I shall find the way blindfold, thou dear,
“ dear, ill-natured devil---She is confounded strong.

[*Pulling her.*]

“ *Aura.*” Help, help, for Heaven's sake ! murder, murder.



COUNTRY LASSES.

Heart — *In the mean time here is something to drink the lady's health.*

Act IV.

Scene II.

Wheatley print.

Heath fildp.

London Printed for John Bell British Library Strand Jan^y 7. 1791.

JOHN FREEHOLD, and two Threshers, who run up to
Mოდель; disarm and seize him.

JOHN. Ah, ware haunches, ware haunches! —
So, so; the hunt is safe. [Exit AUNT.]
What vicious cur is this, poaching by himself?
My good friend, Mr. Модель? Why, thou
art a very impudent fellow. What canst thou say for
thyself now, ha?

Mოდель. Say? why, I say your kinswoman here was
very civilly, and all that.

JOHN. You would have been too civil, and all that.
Bring him along; he shall have a fair meet-
ing. Our moat, Sir, is somewhat wide, but not
very deep; now, if you can out-run, and out-swim
him, I believe you'll not make a hunting-seat of
our house again in haste.

Mოდель. Consider, Sir, you were once a gentleman
yourself.

JOHN. Sentence is passed; don't trouble the
court, I'll hear nothing. You're an idle fellow,
that strolls about the country pilfering of maiden-
heads. Why, did I not catch you in the fact?
But that I have a decent regard for poverty,
I would have cut away the only credential you
have of humanity, and made a walking sign of
it.

Mოდель. Sir, I am a gentleman, and expect to be so

JOHN. How?

COUNTRY LASSES

How in the mean time here is
nothing to drink the ladies health
well.

Enter FREEHOLD, and two Threshers, who run up to
MODELY, disarm and seize him.

Free. Ah, ware haunches, ware haunches !---
 There---So, so; the hunt is safe. [*Exit Aura.*]
 What vicious cur is this, poaching by himself?
 What, my good friend, Mr. Modely? Why, thou
 art a very impudent fellow. What canst thou say for
 thyself now, ha?

Mode. Say! why, I say your kinswoman here was
 very uncivil, and all that.

Free. You would have been too civil, and all that.
 Come, bring him along; he shall have a fair race
 for it. Our moat, Sir, is somewhat wide, but not
 very clear; now, if you can out-run, and out-swim
 Towser, I believe you'll not make a hunting-seat of
 my house again in haste.

“ *Mode.* Consider, Sir, you were once a gentleman
 “ yourself.

“ *Free.* Sentence is passed; don't trouble the
 “ court; I'll hear nothing. You're an idle fellow,
 “ that stroll about the country pilfering of maiden-
 “ heads. What, did I not catch you in the fact,
 “ ha? But that I have a decent regard for posterity,
 “ I would have cut away the only credentials you
 “ have of humanity, and made a walking sign of
 “ you.”

Mode. Sir, I am a gentleman, and expect to be so
 used.

Free. How?

Mode. Take off your bull-dogs ; let me speak one word with you alone, and I'll tell you.

Free. Come on, Sir ; I'll trust you ; I'll give you more credit than you deserve. Do you hear, stay without, that you may be ready when I call. [*Exeunt country fellows.*] Well, Sir, what have you to say now, why sentence should not pass ?

Mode. Say ! why, I say, Sir, that what I did was according to the common law ; that the common law is custom, and that it has been the custom, time out mind, for us young fellows, whose blood flows briskly, to use no ceremony with a wholesome cherry-cheek, whether on haycock, meadow, barn, or bed.

Free. Extremely well ! and so you would have knocked her down, and ravished her.

Mode. A little agreeable force is absolutely necessary ; it saves the woman's honour, and gives such an edge to the appetite——

Free. Ay. And so, having finished this honourable affair, that is, having robbed the poor girl of all that could be dear or valuable, having dishonoured her, disgraced yourself, and done an irreparable wrong ; why, you could have hummed a tune, taken a pinch of snuff, sat down perfectly satisfied in the probity of the action, and have reconciled yourself to your own reflections with as much ease as you drink a dish of tea. What provokes you to this injustice ?

Mode. Love, love and joy, old wormwood, I have made a league with my youth, to get the better of

time ; I have fast hold of his forelock, and won't let a moment pass without enjoyment.

Impatient sense, and nature dies,

And love a second life supplies.

Gentle boy, then fill my cup,

A bumper, Cupid, fill it up

With youth, and wit, and noble fires,

Vigorous health, and young desires.

“ *Free.* Humph!---a poetical fop too. But let me
“ tell you, friend, you mistake your passion ; 'tis
“ not love, but lust. Love is a generous volunteer,
“ lust a mercenary slave ; love is a court of honour
“ in the heart, but what you call love is only a scan-
“ dalous itching, a rebellion in the blood.

“ *Mode.* I don't know what you would have by
“ love and desire ; I think they are only different
“ words for the same meaning. Liking begets love,
“ love desire, desire rage, and rage rapture.”

Free. This fellow's in a blaze ; his blood has set him all on fire.

Mode. I love the whole sex, Sir ; the beautiful I adore as angels ; the ugly, as Indians do the devil, for fear ; the witty persuade me, the innocent allure me, the proud raise my ambition, and the humble my charity ; the coquette shews me a pleasing chase, the false virtue of the prude gives oil to my flame, and the good-natured girl quenches it. There's a pleasure in pursuing those that fly, and 'tis cowardly not to meet the fair one that advances. Say what you will, I am in love, in love, old boy, from head to

foot; I am Cupid's butt, and stand ready to receive his whole quiver.

Free. I'll tell thee what thou art; thou art a romance finely bound and gilt, and thy inside is full of silly love and lies, senseless and showish.

Mode. And thou art a satire, as the title says, against vice and immorality; "but thy inside contains a weak indulgence only to the overflowings of a rank gall, full of ill-nature and pride. Yet art thou silly enough to think virtue consists in railing against vice, like those jilts, who think they cover their own infamy, by abusing other women.

"*Free.* Well said! now, thou aimest at truth, I like thee.

"*Mode.* Good-nature only ought to be the test of good sense, as a man proves his faith by his charity.

"*Free.* Well, then, my faith is, that thou art a modern whoremaster, that is, a villain; and I have charity enough to tell thee so.

"*Mode.* You mistake your humour for your virtue, and fancy, because you are a cynic, you're a philosopher too. Pr'ythee, polish thyself, my dear rough diamond." What, I think thou art the sourest old fellow that ever I met with. You invite a man to your house here, and then deny him the only tit-bit he has a mind to.

Free. You have broke every social virtue, and yet

impudently imagine you are in the character of a gentleman.

Mode. How, Sir! you grow scurrilous. [Going.

Free. Nay, you shall hear me, or I'll recall my myrmidons; they wait my word, you know. A gentleman ought not to dare to think of doing wrong to any. His love, his friendship, his courage, his generosity, his religion, his word and his honour, should be inviolably bound to the strict laws of virtue.

Mode. This may be the picture of a saint; but for the character of a fine gentleman, 'tis as unlike it, my dear——

Free. As you are. Your love is lust, your friendship interest, your courage brutal butchery, your bounty usury, your religion hypocrisy, your word a lie, and your honour a jest.

Mode. Ha, ha! very concise and smart; but I take nothing ill of thee. Thou art like a frosty morning, sharp and wholesome. Dear Sir, your most obedient servant; you see I have stood your Jobation very patiently. And so, compliments being passed on both sides, I humbly take my leave.

Free. Hold, Sir, I demand satisfaction for the wrong you have done my family.

Mode. With all my heart, old boy; your time, place, and weapons. Will you use seconds?

Free. Ay, and thirds too, if you provoke me. Look ye, friend, according to the justest sentiments I can form of this affair, you ought to be knocked o' the head, extinguished for the good of society, as

I would one o' my cattle that had got a distemper in his blood which made him run a muck at the herd. But custom, that invades the rights of nature, and makes us act by senseless example, says you are a gentleman, and have a right to justify one wrong by committing another.

Mode. Pox o' your preamble! come to the point, Sir.

Free. The young woman you have wronged has a servant, Sir, a young Oxonian, a lover of hers, who at present lives with his kinsman, Sir John, above; he shall meet you, and bleed you for this fever. I know the young fellow loves her, and has spirit to do himself justice. I think that is the cant you have for it. He shall meet you half an hour hence in the meadow behind the farm alone.

Mode. Odso!—Your bullies about you too---Well, Sir, I'll meet him.

Free. If you fail, I'll stick your name upon every tree in the parish, for a coward, a poltroon, that dares not fight in a wrong cause; and that is a greater reproach to a man of modern honour, than a thief or a murderer. [Exit Freehold.

Mode. An ill-natured old puppy, to engage a man in a quarrel too—However, I think I am pretty well off; this is much better than the discipline of Towser and the ditch, or than my friend's matrimonial comfort; though 'tis very ugly, methinks, too, to fight upon an idle business here. But 'tis the fashion, the

mode, and, as old Crabtree says, right or wrong we are obliged to obey it.

“ Thus fashionable folly makes us stake

“ The loss of virtue for our honour’s sake :

“ Stronger than nature tyrant custom grows ;

“ For what we venture life to keep, we lose.” [Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Close behind the Farm. Enter MODELY.

Modely.

A FINE evening, really, for a cool thrust or two——
Where is the warrior that is to entertain me here ?
’Egad, I wish ’twas over ; I don’t like it ; it sits but
qualmishly upon my stomach. Oh ! yonder he comes
cross the stile—No, that’s a boy, I think. I suppose
he has sent some formal excuse ; the women have
locked him up, the country is raised, or the justices
have sent their warrants forth to stop all military pro-
ceedings, and make up the matter over a cup of Oc-
tober.

Enter AURA, in Boy’s Clothes.

Aura. Your servant, Sir.

Mode. Yours, Sir.

Aura. I am invited hither, Sir, to do justice to an
injured beauty, whom I have the honour to be well
with——and I suppose you are my man.

H iij

Mode. Thy man, lovey ; and what then ?

Aura. Why, then, Sir, on the behalf of that fair one, I demand the honourable amends, Sir. To use violence to a lady is an affront not to be put up ; to tear the boughs and offer to hale down the fruit before it was consenting, kindly ripe—If you had climbed up the ladder of her affections, and gathered it regularly with the consent of the owner, there had been no harm done.

Mode. Ha ! thou art a very pretty metaphorical prigster. Hark ye, child, go home presently, or I will gather a handful of nettles under that hedge, and whip thee most unmercifully.

Aura. Huh, huh ! Goliath the second. How he struts and bounces ! Sir, I shall whip you thro' the guts, “ or “ make a pair of bellows of your lungs, for this arrogance. Know, Sir, that what I want in nerve “ and bone, I make up in vigour and youth.” What are your weapons ?

Mode. Nettle-tops, infant, nettle-tops.

Aura. What, are you for your country diversions of this sort ? Flails, cudgels, scythes, back-swords, oaken-towels, or wrestling ?

“ *Mode.* Wouldst thou have me wrestle with a bul-
“ rush ?

“ *Aura.* Ah !” I have brought many a stouter man than you down, before now, with my Cornish hug. Or are you for the town gallantries, single rapier, sword and dagger, sword and pistol, single pistol, blunderbuss, demi-cannon, culverin, howitzer, mor-

tar-piece, or barrel of gunpowder? I am ready, at any of these weapons, to wait your commands.

Mode. Look thee, thou impertinent insect, thou may'st be troublesome, tho' thou canst not be hurtful; therefore, if thou fliest about my face thus, I shall be forced to pat thee down with my hand, and tread thee out.

Aura. Humph!—You're very pert.

Mode. I am so. Pray, tell me, tho', what interest have you in this lady, that she has engaged your haughty littleness in her affairs?

Aura. Who, I, Sir? oh, I have been her premier minister a great while. “She is a fine woman really, considering she has been rusticated from her birth too; her only fault is, poor creature, she is doat-ingly fond of me; I dress her; I undress her;” by her good will, she would not suffer any living thing to stick a pin about her besides me.

Mode. Indeed! and so thou art her play-fellow, her gentle refreshment, her pretty pillow-boy, her afternoon's cordial, and her tea at breakfast, her evening's slumber and her morning's indolence.

Aura. You are superlatively smart. Sir, I shall give you to understand instantly, that the reputation of a lady is not thus impiously to be sported with—Oons, eat your words; down with them again this moment, or I'll ram the insolent epithets back again with the hilt of my sword.

Mode. Cool thyself, Narcissus, cool thyself, child; relieve thy reason with a dram of reflection. 'Tis

the town-talk : the whole village, and all the parishes round ring of it. I am sure thou wouldst not die a martyr to falsehood. Why, thy engagements there are known to every body ; 'tis no secret, my prettiness.

Aura. Ay, Sir, 'tis true ; but 'tis not so gallant to enter into particularities of that sort. Tho', as you say, indeed, I am sensible 'tis no secret. The affair has made a noise ; the fury of the poor creature's passion did now and then blind her discretion. I think this is the seventh duel I have engaged in for her and Flora——The seventh ; no, the eighth——there were three justices, two excisemen, a parson, and yourself——

Mode. Thou art a terrible little squib. What had Flora to do in this quarrel ? What ! you have had her too, hah ?

Aura. Ah, Sir, she ; but she is married. I am glad of it, faith, very glad of it. Poor man ! your friend, I mean. I hope he is not apt to be jealous ? “ In troth, I believe she is *enceint*.” If his son and heir steps into the world a month or two before the usual time, I could wish he would rather impute it to the forwardness of his boy, than the ill conduct of his wife.

Mode. Thou art the most impudent, wicked, little, bragging, lying son of a whore that ever I met with.

Aura. Demme, Sir, son of a whore in your teeth !—What ! because I have reprieved you, suffered you

to breathe a minute or two longer, while I diverted you with my gallantries---you grow insolent.

Mode. Ha, ha! thou art a very potgun charged with air.

Aura. And thou art a wooden blunderbuss without any charge at all; “a mere pasteboard giant. What! “I am not such a pigeon neither, to be scared with “a goat’s hair beard and a dagger of lath.”

Mode. Thou most insignificant teasing terrier, thou ferret of a coney-warren---by heavens, if thou dost provoke me, I will cut thee into minced meat, and have thee dished up for thy mistress’s wedding dinner.

[*Modely draws, and advances towards Aura.*]

Aura. [*Advancing too, and presenting a pistol*] Put up your sword; put it up, I say—Death, Sir, this instant, or you die! [*Modely puts up his sword*] So, so——

Mode. Hah! What have you these tricks too, my little bully?

Aura. Very well; now you have obeyed me, I’ll use you like a gentleman. You have a longer reach than I, and therefore it may not be so reasonable to engage with single sword. Here, take one of these; this, or this; which you please: [*Presenting pistols*] You may change it, or draw it and recharge it, if you suspect my honour.

Mode. How are they loaded?

Aura. Equally, Sir, with a brace of balls.

Mode. What can be the meaning of all this? Sure the young dog is not in earnest. [*Aside.*]

Enter FREEHOLD.

Free. Hey, my brave boy! my cock o' the game! my lad of mettle! my Cupid in arms! there, he stands his ground to an inch. I told you he would find you sport, my Covent-Garden friend——All I can say is, he shoots flying finely.

Mode. Hah! I am glad you are come, farmer: we were just going to be serious here. This little huff-bluff Hector will let nobody lie with your family but himself, it seems: pr'ythee let us make up this affair, old gentleman. Egad, if I am in the wrong——why——methinks it might be better——I don't know——I can't fancy this cool way of murder, with a flash and a pop——

Free. Oh, Sir, he is a perfect Spaniard with an English heart. I know him——nothing will satisfy him but your blood.

Aura. No, Sir——nothing but your blood——your blood, Sir!

Mode. Say you so? Why then if nothing else will do, have at you, my boy——“ I'll burn your fair per-
“ riwig, i'faith.”

Free. Look at your flint and your prime: are they in right order?

Aura. I warrant you. Please to stand wide a little, Sir; a ball may graze. [*To Freehold.*] Now, come on, Sir. For want of a cloak let us retreat from each other five yards, then turn round upon our heels at one motion, and let fly. Are you ready?

[*They retire and turn round, Modely fires, and Aura drops as if shot.*]

Free. Oh, he is shot! he is killed! my poor boy is murdered.

Mode. What have I done? Curse on my steady hand.

Free. Help! Murder! Murder! Help!

Enter Countrymen.

Mode. Say you so? Nay, then 'tis time to save one; by your leave, as fast as my feet or my fears can carry me.

[*Exeunt all but Freehold and Aura.*]

Aura. What are they gone? Is the stage clear?

Free. Hah, let me kiss thee, my dear little girl; this was admirably performed. I was afraid you durst not have stood the powder.

Aura. No, no—I put in but half a charge, and no wadding—I had really much ado to provoke him to fight: so, so, we'll shew him a little country-play now; we'll teach him to ravish, I warrant.

Free. Well, I must wait upon his companion, honest Heartwell. He expects me to attend him to Sir John's, according to his wife's request.

Aura. Do so; while I slip the back way through the orchard, into the hall-house, and undress, that I may be with you time enough to finish my part: this is a day of business, i'faith.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Hall of Sir JOHN's House. Enter 'DOUBLEJUGG and' SHACKLEFIGURE.

“ *Shack.* Verily, Madam Betty hath invited every
“ creature in the parish to-morrow.

“ *Doub.* And Sir John hath commanded me to
“ throw the cellar-doors open, and make the whole
“ country reel—Here will be brave randing, i'faith;
“ all the steeples in the country are to rock---and I
“ have summoned together all the bagpipes, tabors,
“ drums, trumpets, and the whole fraternity of cats-
“ guts within seven miles round.

“ *Shack.* One would imagine Madam Betty stood
“ candidate for the county——

“ *Doub.* And was to drink her way to Wetminster
“ thro' a sea of October.

“ *Shack.* What are all these uncommon prepara-
“ tions designed for?

“ *Doub.* Nay, I don't know; I don't inquire into
“ state affairs, but I shall know more on't when I am
“ drunk; for then I am very peery.

“ *Shack.* In the mean time mind your affairs; we
“ have much business to do. [*Exit Doub.*] I must
“ wait here, to introduce the strange gentleman,
“ whom my master is so fond of.”

Enter HEARTWELL and FREEHOLD.

Heart. How could you use a lover so roughly?

Free. A rough lover should be used so : why, he was just going to knock her down—I suppose that is his method.

Heart. And the little girl stood his fire gallantly ?

Free. O, most heroically ! O' my conscience, I believe she would have fought him in earnest.

Heart. Is he taken ?

Free. Ay, ay, we have him fast.

Heart. Well, then let his fears pay the price of his sin : I think his punishment very just. But see where old Steady-muscle stands in form to introduce us.

Free. Ay, come on now ; you shall see a worthy piece of antiquity, a right bred old English country gentleman ; one who keeps open house all the whole year round, and yet never took or paid a penny for a vote in his life.

Shack. Sir, with the greatest submission, if it shall be your worship's good pleasure, I will wait on the company within, and know if it shall be their pleasure to receive you. [Exit Shack.]

Free. Do so, old Stiff-rump, do. This fellow keeps himself as regular as his day-book.

Heart. Company ! What company ?

Free. A friend or two only, perhaps, that Sir John has invited to a dance, or so.

Heart. A dance---a friend---'Sdeath, you distract me ! Excuse me to him, I beg you.

Free. No, no : what, you must bear with a little noise at first---A bridegroom, and afraid of a fiddle. But see the door opens, and the company are moving towards us.

SCENE III.

Opens. FLORA and two Women Servants appear drest genteelly; they move down towards HEARTWELL.

Heart. What's here? Ladies too! So, I find I must run thro' the impertinence of the night. I would give a little finger now to be in bed, the curtains drawn, and all quiet, with my dear girl by my side. So---it seems I must salute them——Hah!

Flora. Sir, you have stolen a wedding among us here, and we come time enough, I hope, to give you joy of it.

Heart. My love! my dear! I am surprised! Why hast thou changed thyself thus from what thou wert?

Flora. I hope my features are not altered with my dress.

Heart. I swear, my love, thou canst receive no addition by dress, but what will injure the simplicity of thy charms. But, pr'ythee, tell me why you have changed your dress? “Sure you must be sensible you “wanted nothing to make you victorious in your “other habit.”

Flora. To tell you, Sir, the truth, then; I was obliged to change my dress; my landlord has obliged me to it, and you know we country-folk must obey our landlords.

Heart. Well, I am satisfied.—You have obeyed him then.

Flora. Yes, Sir; but he is a very obstinate, self-

willed man ; and I think a little too barbarously insists—

Heart. Insists ! Upon what ?

Flora. Why, he insists upon my performance of the Custom of the Manor ; and therefore, in order to make me more pleasing in his eyes, commanded me to dress thus.

Heart. Custom of the Manor—Dress yourself—Commanded you to be pleasing to his eye---What is all this heap of confusion and nonsense ?

Free. Why, Sir, I'll tell you, in short ; 'tis this—The lord of our manor has claimed by prescription, time out of mind, and still does claim, the first night's lodging of every tenant's daughter married here ; therefore our maidens, when they marry, go out of this parish, unless they are willing to pay the forfeit in kind.

Heart. What ! you are merry ; very merry ; so, go on : how !

Free. Yet when such an accident as this happened here, he generally used to take an equivalent in money or goods : but now he is resolved to be paid in kind ; he will take no modus ; and for that reason has sent for you hither, to let you know his claim.

Heart. Confound his claim——curse upon his manor, and his custom too : I'll shoot him through the head for having the insolence to think on't.

Free. Ay, but that is not the case ; that is not the business, my friend.

Heart. What case ! What business ! Confound your impertinence : out with it.

Free. Why, then suppose your wife should—

Heart. Should what ? I tread upon a razor's edge—
Should what ?

Free. Should like this landlord.

Heart. Like him !

Free. Ay, love him, love him to distraction, doat upon him ; nay, more, be as willing to pay him down this custom in kind as he is to receive it.

Heart. Furies ! damnation ! What do you mean ?—
[*To his wife.*] Madam, what does all this tend to ?

Free. [*Aside.*] So, so : his blood circulates finely !
—Faith, I begin to pity him. What a confounded hurry his spirits are in !

Flora. Why, 'tis even so, husband. This landlord I am obliged to love, obliged to it by all the ties of faith, honour, and gratitude.

Heart. Oh, very well, very well ! [*Walks about in disorder.*] Tell me, thou evil spirit in an angel's form—Wherefore was I chosen out to be thus abused, ha ?

Free. Because you are a man of fortune, Sir ; because she hopes in a little time to break your heart, and enjoy the full third of two thousand pounds a year.

Heart. Pray, Madam, favour me—You see I bear this affair very calmly—Pray, tell me, tho' I suppose 'tis no unreasonable request—what particular obligations you have to this landlord ?

Flora. Such, Sir, of such a nature—you force me to repeat them—as nothing can dissolve. I love him passionately, and I believe his affection for me is mutual; nay, I hope it will endure to the last moment of my life.

Heart. That it shall; for I'll put an end to it instantly. [*Offers to draw, Freehold holds him.*]

Free. Hold, hold! Fie, Don Orlando! draw upon a woman. Look ye, Sir, erect your front, hold up your head, and learn to bear your fortune like a husband. I assure you, Sir, your lady has been at St. James's, she has, Sir; and she plays at piquet, ombre, basset; yes, and has her assemblies, tea-tables, visiting-days; together with a polite taste of every incidental pleasure thereunto belonging.

Heart. [*Singing.*] Tol, lol, tol!—Pray, Me'em, what's o'clock? I have been married but four hours, and I am breeding already. My wife, it seems, has antedated my commission. Get my horses ready. I'll ride post to Japan, but I'll be rid of this affair. But first I'll cut this toll-taking rascal's throat. A dog! Who shall drink his skim-milk?—"In what a dream have I been? I'd give all my estate it were one. Death! let me see him"—What's his name? Where is he? Who is this landlord?

Flora. Let your passion abate a little: let it ebb a while: recall your reason, and I'll tell you—Know then, you are this landlord, Sir, the sole lord of this demesne and me: this morning I was mistress of this house, these servants, and all the dirty acres within

three miles round us ; now they are yours, you are their master now.

Free. What say you, Sir ? Shall the landlord have his due, or no ?

Heart. My heart, my tongue, my eyes, my soul o'erflow with joy, what shall I do to pay this unexampled goodness ?

Flora. I was resolv'd, fully resolv'd, never to venture on a husband, till I was certainly convinc'd my person, and not my fortune, was his aim ; that proof I think you have most generously given me, and I feel myself transported with joy, when I think I am capable of making you this grateful return.—I hope you will forgive the little deceits I have used to procure these assurances.

Heart. Give me thy hand, thy lips, thy heart ; there let me dwell for ever, I cannot be more happy.

Flora. I thought our jest grew a little too severe at last. It gave me pain to see him suffer so for an imaginary evil.

Free. Oh, it was a proof of his passion ; 'tis good to give nature a fillip now and then, 'tis like a race in a frosty morning, it sets the blood upon the flow most deliciously—But see your friend in bonds, Mr. Modely.

MODEL Y brought in, guarded by two Country Fellows, a Constable, &c.

Heart. What ! in captivity, George !

Const. An' it please your worship, we have catch'd

a vagrom man here, who has committed a murder as I may say, in neighbour Freehold's Five-Acres; and so, Sir, an' like you, we bring him hither to take his exhibition upon the said burglary afore Sir Jann.

Heart. Murder'd! Who has he murder'd?

Const. Neà neà, I knaw nat.—The young fellow and he beliken ha' had some words abouten their sweethearts, and so he shot 'en—That's aw.

Heart. I always told you, George, what these wild ways would bring you to, but you would still run riot upon every thing; what could you expect?

Mode. Yes, faith, we have made a very pretty expedition—One of us is marry'd, and t'other may be hang'd. My—comfort is, I shall be out of my pain first.

Flora. Oh, my dear, that barbarous man, it seems, has kill'd one of the prettiest youths that ever liv'd the promise of the finest gentleman.

Mode. Hah!—A very fine gentleman, truly. Hark-ye, friend, you that are so happy in your chains, don't insult——The wasps have been at those sweetmeats——The little rascal bounc'd of favours from that very virtuous lady, your spouse——and therefore I kill'd him.

Heart. That does not relate to me, my dear George; her person was her own, you know, till within these few hours---Pr'ythee don't mind these things now, but turn all thy thoughts on another world——Think on thy past life, and tremble.

Mode. A contented one, too---Mighty good! I

don't doubt, as this was a gentleman's duel, I shall have gentleman's play for my life : keep my chamber a month or two, touch cold iron, and come out as free as liberty---While you, having beat your poor wings in vain against the bar of your conjugal cage, sit sullenly moulting the remainder of your feathers, and sicken to death o' the pip.

Free. I believe I shall secure that affair; I can prove premeditated malice; I can prove the challenge—and you know very well I saw you shoot him before his pistol was cock'd.

Mode. So---so---Nay, then my business is done I---Thou devil, what have I done to thee, that thou tormentest me thus?—If I could come at thee, I'd pawn my credit for one sin more, and send thee down to the father of falsehood, with a lie in thy mouth.

Heart. Don't vex the poor man so.

Flora. Consider him, I beseech you, as a dying man.

Heart. True! All his time will be little enough; don't put him into a passion now.

Mode. Fools and cuckolds—Your pity is as contemptible as your scorn—Sir, Sir, why do you treat me thus?

Flora. Shall I send for Mr. Puzzletext? He will give you some wholesome, ghostly advice. Poor creature, how he looks!

Mode. Insulting devil!

Flora. He will shew you, in a clear light, the folly

of wenching, “and running a muck after the exorbitant desires and lusts of the flesh.”

Heart. Have you no feeling, George? no sense of your condition?

Mode. Faith, my friend, barbarous as thou art, I have a heart that yet relents for thee, tho’ thou art thus unkind: I would not live, methinks, to see thee hen-peck’d round the parish, hunted like a craven by a pullet of thy own dunghill: No, free thyself like a man---Burn powder first, faith do; dispatch an ounce of lead thro’ thy unthinking *pia mater*, and sleep quietly once for all.

Free. He raves, poor man, he raves.

Flora. Send for the parson quickly, before his reason fails. He looks very wildly.

Heart. Ay---he may try at least to make him feel.

Free. Ah---I am afraid his conscience is very callous.

Heart. Suppose we send for a doctor and a surgeon---

Free. And breathe a vein, and purge, and shave---Where’s Sir John?---

Mode. Pox o’ the parson, the doctor, the surgeon, Sir John, and all of you. What, Mr. Constable, am I to be set up here, like a shrove-tide cock, to be pelted by every clown in the hundred?

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. Give you joy, cousin Betty, give you joy: codso, you prog very well for yourself---I did not know you went a husband-hunting all this while

——Give you joy, Sir, give you joy ! what, you have stolen a fortune and did not know it ; very good, very good.

Heart. An accident only, Sir John ; I was walking in the fields, when a star shot and took me up into its orb.

Sir John. That is nonsense---but 'tis pretty, very pretty. Come, gentlemen, what will you drink ? What will you drink ? Codso ! Where is Tim ? Where is Tim ? Odd, we will be very merry ; I am heartily glad of this affair ; every man shall buy a pair of new lungs ; we'll shut ourselves up, remove the cellar into the great hall, and make one continual roar that shall last a twelvemonth.

Heart. Sir, here's an angry person, an acquaintance of mine, who has committed a gentleman's murder, and is in great haste for his Mittimus ; pray dispatch him.

Sir John. Codso, I am sorry for it ; pray let me know the case.

Enter Constable with AURA prisoner.

Const. An' it please your worship, here's another vagrom that we have taken upon disposition of his concerns in the said murder, and so having pistols in his pockets, we ha' brought him afore your worship.

Sir John. Bring him nearer ; shew me his face. Codso, a pretty young fellow ! let me look at him. What ! how ! Madam Aura, as I live ! What whim, what chimera, what adventure put thee into this habit ?

Mode. Ha!---Aura!---alive too, in my little Hector's clothes; I vow to gad---Tol, lol, dol, lol-----
Hark'e, my little reprobate bully---I am surprisingly rejoiced to see thee; faith I am! Buss!-----Gad, I never was so much in love with thee in my life.

Aura. Will you ravish me again, Mr. Modely?---
Huh. Odd if you do, I'll swinge you.

Mode. Heartwell, how dost? Madam Flora, your most obedient---Joy, Madam, joy! Freehold, faith, thou art a very clever old gentleman---Sir John, I rejoice to see you---I am prodigiously pleased, in troth; I was in a horrible cold sweat just now, tho' my proud heart would not own it.

Flora. Ah, if they could but frighten you into sobriety once.

Mode. I should sink into a husband; tho' faith, I find a strange stir within me about that whimsical girl there: hark'e, Madam, dare you venture upon a rake, in full assurance (as some ladies have) that your charms will reduce him?-----

Aura. And so fall a martyr to my pride instead of my virtue.

Free. Hold, Sir, I have some interest here, and I don't think you tame enough yet to be marry'd-----
But if the girl is foolish enough to venture, why let her own inclinations lead her: and then if she falls into a ditch, she can't complain of her guide.

Aura. Indeed I shall not give you that opportunity of being reveng'd.

Mode. Perhaps the punishment may be mine; try me, trust me, since I can have you no other way.

Aura. I tell you, Sir; you must, before I dare give credit to you, serve me faithfully at least two whole months together, and then if we like one another as well as we do now——Why, we'll settle our fortunes and our inclinations——

Mode. And jog on in the road of our fathers.

Aura. Amen.

Mode. So be it.

Flora. I am sorry to hear your misfortune; in our absence, it seems, the house was robbed. [*To Sir John.*

Sir John. Codso! Ay, ay, a villanous story, cousin. The Duke of Gasconade lay here last night; ay, his grace did me the honour---But he was most barbarously treated. I am in hopes of catching 'em; if I do——

Enter LURCHER to Sir JOHN.

Lurch. Sir, if you please, one word.

Sir John. Well, what have you to say? I am very busy. What would you have, friend?

Lurch. Had not you a man of quality lodg'd in your house last night?

Sir John. Yes, I had, Sir; and what then? what then?

Lurch. You have a nephew.

Sir John. Ha! what!

Lurch. That man of quality was your nephew.

Sir John. And you are he! Ay, 'tis so, 'tis so; why? I am struck dumb, ay, really, quite speechless——Why, could a man who looked so like quality, d'ye see—Well, well, 'tis an impudent age, a very impudent age, and verily thou art the most impudent fel-

low in it—Codso, I'll have thee hanged in thy blue garter and Bristol stones for a theatrical peer as thou art.

Lurch. Please to hear me one word, Sir.

Sir John. Ay, ay,---I am your grace's most obedient humble servant, and return you my most hearty thanks for the particular favours you have bestowed on the most unworthy of your creatures: hark ye, poltroon, did you never hear of *Scandalum Magnatum*, and so forth? But what can you say for yourself now, hah?

Lurch. Sir, I say, that uncommon generosity with which you treated me, under that feigned character I bore, struck so warmly upon my mind, I could not bear the compunction I felt even from my success; and thus I throw myself upon your mercy, am ready to restore all I have wrong'd you of, and only beg your forgiveness.

Sir John. This is frankly done, very generously done, indeed——In troth, the rogue touches me, he has almost brought tears into my eyes; I profess he has——What shall I do? [*Aside.*]

Lurch. Necessity drove hard---My creditors threatened me hourly with a gaol---Nature prompted me to struggle with every difficulty; if you can have a favourable thought of me——

Sir John. I profess the young knave has conquered ---I profess he has——[*Turning to Lurcher.*] Well, Dick, “well, if I should venture to restore you to
“my family, what security shall I have you won't
“return to these evil ways again, Dick?

“ *Lurch.* I must repeat it, it was the most pressing
“ necessity only that reduced me to these extremes ;
“ if you can forgive me, Sir, I will endeavour here-
“ after to deserve it.

“ *Sir John.*” I do, I do forgive thee, Dick---I profess my heart is so full it runs over at my eyes.

Lurch. Your extreme goodness covers me with confusion.

Sir John. Well, will your grace dismiss the ragamuffins of your train, pay the rascals, and send 'em home to their wives ? “ Like Falstaff's followers,
“ they are safe by being in good company. Come,
“ come, all is made up ; let us have one trip for it
“ now, I beseech you : what, a wedding without a
“ fiddle, man, is like a troop without a trumpet.
“ Codso, we will foot it till a good capermonger
“ shall be able to copy the figure of the dance from
“ our impressions on the pavement. [*A dance.*”

Heart. Let these accidents, George, hereafter, when you shall please to think, make you remember, that there is no real lasting good but in virtue, and that the greatest happiness below consists, however libertines and half-wits may affect to ridicule it, in honourable love.

*When heaven conspicuous merit would regard,
A virtuous woman is the great reward :
This lovely blessing sweetens life alone,
Sooths all our ills, and keeps hard fortune down ;
Gives us an antepast of joys above,
Beauty and virtue, harmony and love.*

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by AURA, in Boy's Clothes.

*CRITICS, the poet's champion here I stand ;
Lo! in his name, the combat I demand :
'Tis my opinion that the cause is good,
And I'll defend it with my heart's best blood ;
I'll push you, my bold boys, the round parade,
Cart over arm, or terse, or flanconnade.
——Codso! these breeches have so fir'd my brain,
I shan't be easy till I've kill'd my man :
What! not one beau step forth to give me battle ;
Where are those pretty things that used to tattle
Such tender nonsense?——But they're all so civil
They hate a naked weapon ; 'tis the devil.
——Now let me die, my dear, Sir Coxcomb cries,
You want no other weapons, but your eyes.*

*I hate these fawning triflers, and declare
Against all smock-fac'd critics open war.*

*Know, gentlemen, the poet's my ally,
And I'll defend him to the last, or die ;
My sword is out, I'll never basely sue,
Nor sheath it while the enemy's in view ;
No bribes, no tricks, no wheedling of my face,
Include us both i'th' treaty, if you please ;
But, faith, I'll never make a separate peace.*

EPILOGUE.

*No, ye French heroes, I'll not take your word,
You'll beat a man when you have got his sword;
Ay, that's your play—I know ye, Sirs, of old,
You bully like the devil—with your gold;
What must we do, then?—Settle plenipo's,
And bravely, sword in hand, treat with our foes.
To you we fly, ye charitable fair,
To put an end to this dramatic war;
Your smiles will cause all hostile acts to cease,
And make a lasting, honourable peace.*



Johnson, Charles,

The country lasses; Or, The custom of the manor a comedy ; adapted for
theatrical representation, as performed at the Theatre-Royal, in Covent
Garden ; regulated from the Prompt-Books, by permission of the managers

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